

# African language documentation: new data, methods and approaches

Edited by Mandana Seyfeddinipur



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## Language documentation in Africa: Turning the tables

Mandana Seyfeddinipur and Mary Chambers<sup>1</sup>  
*SOAS, University of London*

**1. INTRODUCTION.** Over the past 20 years, language documentation activities have been increasing all over the world. Major funding initiatives in Germany (Dokumentation Bedrohter Sprachen (DoBeS) funded by Volkswagen Stiftung), the UK (Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP) funded by Arcadia) and the US (Documentation of Endangered Languages (DEL) funded by the National Science Foundation) have enabled more and more scholars and students to conduct fieldwork and to document languages for which little or no documentation exists. Training courses are taking place worldwide, teaching theory and methods in language documentation, and building capacity not only in Western academic institutions but also in the countries and communities where many undocumented languages are spoken.

Language documentation scholars have also initiated a critical evaluation of central concepts in the endangered languages documentation discourse, including assessments of concepts such as language endangerment and language shift, the documentary practices of scholars in the field and digital archiving practices. In particular, linguists working in Sub-Saharan Africa are now challenging the discussions traditionally dominated by North American and Australian discourses. New studies reinvigorating classic Boasian concepts and methodologies challenge the applicability of these concepts to the African context (see e.g. Essegbey et al. 2015, Lüpke & Storch 2013, Mc Laughlin 2009, Vigouroux & Mufwene 2008), as many of the issues and proposed solutions of the language documentation discourse to date do not apply to many areas of the continent (nor, indeed, to the many multilingual linguistic ecologies that can be found worldwide).

Scholars are proposing a rethinking of models, theories and methods in the discourse of language documentation and language endangerment. The main line of thought presented in this volume is a broadening of the scope of linguistic investigation and documentation with an ethnographic view. A deeper contextual embedding of linguistic data in a detailed description of language use and its sociocultural context allows for a better understanding and interpretation of current language ecologies and of the documentary and descriptive data gathered within them. A broader understanding of a larger set of language use patterns, linguistic contexts and ecologies can in turn feed into our understanding of how languages evolve, shift and change, and how multilingual patterns arise and may either persevere or decline.

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<sup>1</sup> The authors would like to thank all the presenters and participants at the workshop “New data, methods, and approaches to African language documentation” (held as part of ELDP’s Endangered Languages Week 2013) for their valuable contributions and the resulting discussions which made this volume possible. We are also grateful to Jeff Good and Felix Ameka for their insightful comments on this chapter, and to the anonymous reviewers who read all the papers.

This volume brings together a selection of papers exemplifying research based on a range of language documentation projects in Africa. The papers address various aspects of the African context, questioning research practices and presenting new insights into multilingual repertoires and their relevance to documentary methodologies and approaches. Such approaches allow linguistics to be put on an empirical footing. However, our choices of the types of data we collect and the methods we use to collect them are already a determining factor not only in the design of a corpus but also in how we view and analyse a language as an entity, how we assess levels of endangerment and how we decide who constitutes a speaker and who does not. In short, when we make decisions about what to record, we are also deciding the limits and boundaries of what may simplistically be seen as an ideologically “discrete” language, when in fact the actual situation may be very much more complex.

The documentation discourse that has developed over the past 20 years has been dominated by North American and Australian insights and ideologies. This is because language documentation as a discipline was first established there, with Hale et al. 1992, Krauss 1992 and others setting out the urgent need for the documentation of endangered languages. However, even in the earliest stages of this discussion, Africanists such as Ladefoged (1992) were pointing out that the African context is vastly different and that viewing language loss and language shift as necessarily bad is a value judgment and may not be viewed by speakers of these languages in the same way as by the linguists whose goal is to document them.

In contexts such as Australia, where language is used as a means of establishing indigenous rights to particular territories, the ideological notion of one language, one tribe, one land (perhaps modelled on the European ideology of the nation state) may mean that a more accurate picture of complex repertoires and multilingualism is unhelpful to the groups who are the subjects of such documentations (see e.g. Henderson 2002, Boynton 2014). In contrast, as pointed out by Ladefoged (1992), an emphasis on individual languages in the African context may be seen as an inappropriate focus on tribalism, while in countries such as Tanzania, the promotion of a national language may be seen as of major importance in the striving for national unity; at the same time, the ability to speak and be educated in a national language may be a matter of pride and an economic advantage, rather than a matter of regret.

As Essegbey et al. (2015: 4) point out, when speakers of African languages do shift, it is often to related languages, and a multilingual ecology is usually maintained. Mufwene (2002), meanwhile, emphasises the importance of recognising the vastly different impacts of different colonial experiences and histories in different language ecologies across the world:

we cannot overlook similarities, such as the fact that language loss has been the most catastrophic in settlement colonies and new language varieties have emerged additively in trade colonies (i.e. without replacing some extant languages). On the other hand, we must still note differences from one colony to another, regardless of whether the members of the relevant subset can all be identified as plantation or non-plantation settlement colonies, or as trade or exploitation colonies. Settlement colonies of North America still differ from those of Latin America, plantation col-



onies of the Atlantic and Indian oceans were not quite the same as those of the Pacific, and exploitation colonies of Africa were not quite the same as those of Asia.

The theoretical discourse of language documentation shapes the research methodologies and practices used in the field. Documentation is usually grounded in language description and the goal of writing a grammar, supplemented by a lexicon or dictionary and text collection in the so-called Boasian triad. Woodbury's (2005, 2011) notion of the ancestral code as a major focus of documentary activities is in some senses, of course, a natural and obvious outcome of documentation activities: this is usually the domain that is most endangered, holding an iconic value for both speakers and linguists as representing the language in its "original", "traditional" or "unaltered" form - particularly where revitalisation is the goal, as is often the case in Australia or North America.

Childs et al. (2014) challenge this notion for the African context, proposing a "socio-linguistic" model as a basis for producing a fuller record of the language practices of a community. However, an ethnographic approach, ideally based on the work of interdisciplinary teams, has been promoted from the very beginnings of language documentation as a discipline. Boas himself, as an anthropologist, saw language as only one aspect of a much broader anthropological picture of human diversity (that also encompassed social and economic organisation, religion, art and a great deal more) (Moore 2009). A language documentation is defined by Himmelmann (1998: 166) as aiming "at the record of the linguistic practices and traditions of a speech community" (his emphasis), while Woodbury (2005) sets out as good documentary practice an approach that focuses "on actual language behaviour in contemporary speech communities... on linguistic creativity and adaptivity, seeing language and communication not so much as things, but as ways and strategies". A documentation of a contemporary community ecology will ideally produce "a community-oriented ethnography of speaking (Gumperz and Hymes 1964), focused not just on a single code, but revealing an overall communicative ecology where each different code and way of speaking has a place" (Woodbury 2005: 258).

The papers brought together in this volume return our attention to the need to include a detailed ethnographic approach in our research in order to facilitate understanding of the social realities of speaker populations and their language use and socialisation patterns. They make the case for greater ethnographic sensitisation on the part of the scientific community, especially in contexts like Africa where the issues around the endangerment situation do not centre around the revitalisation of an ancestral code (as is usually the case, for instance, in North America).

**2. THE PAPERS.** **Friederike Lüpke** describes the linguistic biographies and repertoires of members of two households of Agnack (Senegal). The area is characterised by small groups made up of extended families, whose survival has always depended on the utilisation of a range of social strategies for exchange and alliance, including exogamous marriage practices, child fostering and ritually, economically and religiously motivated multilingualism. She shows how an ethnographic approach, taking life histories as a basis, leads to a broader understanding of the linguistic repertoires at play, and explores how ethnic and linguistic identity in this highly dynamic environment can only be understood when such social strategies are taken into account. An understanding of all these factors is necessary

in order to be able to interpret and understand the linguistic behaviour of a community where, in addition to the Atlantic language Bañounk Gujaher, which is “the” village language according to the localist language ideology, Joola Susaana, Balant, Manjak, Pepel, Joola Fogny and Joola Kasa, Wolof, Creole, Gugècer, French and sometimes Pular are all spoken on a daily basis, depending on who is speaking, in what context and to whom. Lüpke’s analysis, revealing the complex repertoires of speakers in Agnack, thereby challenges essentialist language ideologies.

Lüpke goes on to analyse the match between language ideologies and male linguistic practices in this patrilineal and virilocal society, contrasting these with the linguistic identities and practices of women, who usually marry out of their communities of origin. Her examination of these two extended families also exemplifies child fostering practices and shows how the socialisation of children promotes and maintains a situation of complex identities and multilingual repertoires. She concludes by calling for the recognition of multilingualism as a great social and cognitive resource, rather than as interference in a monolingual ideal, and argues that documentary research on multilingualism has the potential to be of benefit not only in sociolinguistics and related fields but also in language management and pedagogy, both in Africa and in the West.

Also investigating the Senegalese context, **Serge Sagna** and **Emmanuel Bassène** present a study on naming practices in Gújjolaay Eegimaa, a Jóola language of southern Senegal, focusing on practices surrounding child-bearing. The documentation of child bearing names for women and death prevention names for infants goes beyond the simple collection of lists of names; it requires an understanding not only of what the names mean but of the belief system behind them, the speakers’ world view and the way names are used in their efforts to protect newborn babies from the supernatural forces that may affect them. Such documentation provides insights into the language contact situation of speakers as they interact with other language communities through the Gaññalen birth ritual, where a woman who has lost several children or had successive miscarriages may leave her home and settle temporarily in another village in order to hide from the forces that are tormenting her; as part of this ritual, both the mother and her child are given special names (often in the language of their host community rather than in Eegimaa) in order to conceal their identities and confuse the spirits. The meanings of such names give insights into the Eegimaa kinship system, and particularly into how speakers conceptualise the relationship between the human and the spiritual world.

Other name changing practices and phenomena of language contact and change are also explored, including name changing to avoid homonymy with the name of a deceased person, the giving of a royal name given when a new king is enthroned, and the adoption of wealth names or praise names, which reflect a person’s wealth in terms of the livestock they own. The latter practice is being lost as money takes the place of cattle as a measure of wealth. The documentation of proper names therefore provides a window not only onto speakers’ belief systems but also onto the sociological and economic changes that are taking place in Eegimaa society. There are excellent possibilities for collaborative research in this area with disciplines such as anthropology and philosophy.

Given the pervasive multilingual practices found in Lower Fungom (NW Cameroon), **Pierpaolo Di Carlo** argues that a documentation of a language requires us not only to focus on language but on the language ecology within which each language exists. He



also provides practical advice on how to include ethnographic work on language ecologies and ideologies in language documentation work. He illustrates his points around a case study of individual multilingualism, showing how language choices are motivated not by a language ideology based on prestige (except in the cases of English and French) but as a means of indexing a speaker's affiliation to one of any number of different groups. The gradual decline of such multilingualism is perceived as "good news" from the perspective of the ancestral code approach to language documentation, in which multilingualism is seen as endangering ancestral languages; however, Di Carlo argues that in Lower Fungom (and elsewhere in Africa), such multilingualism, expressing multiple social identities, is rather an essential part of a long-established language ecology that now seems to be endangered itself. "Going thicker", he explores how multilingualism is advantageous not only in terms of a non-hierarchically structured society, where organisation is at the level of kin-based groups, but that language choices are also closely tied into ritual authority and spiritual agency.

Discussing the importance of an ethnographic and locally grounded approach to documentation, Di Carlo's paper proposes methodological tools through which the communicative practices and language ideologies of a given community, embedded in an understanding of the local language ecology and ideology, might be recorded and analysed, and shows how language ideology might be targeted and dealt with as an archivable documentary outcome. While in many cases the ancestral code approach may be a necessary starting point in documenting a new language, and a more phenomenological approach to documentation may add layers of complexity beyond the scope of a single linguist with limited time and funding, Di Carlo provides a set of practical recommendations intended to facilitate the gathering of ethnographic data and a better understanding of the complex ecologies within which many endangered languages exist.

An often-used practice in fieldwork is to take a team approach and work with local participants to transcribe recordings. **Lutz Marten** and **Malin Petzell** present a case study of the life cycle of a Kagulu text, comparing a recorded oral story, a first transcription of it, and a further edited version, in which Swahili-influenced forms are replaced and supplemented by forms which are felt to be more authentically Kagulu, an interesting reflection of a purist ideology, and the other side of the ancestral code coin described by Woodbury (2005). While raising questions about the status of existing documents in language documentation, their study shows that all versions of the text are valid, 'authentic' representations of a particular linguistic reality.

The basic assumption underlying most transcription practices is that the native speaker just writes down what s/he hears. Conversation analysts have already discussed in detail the interpretive processes underlying transcription: cognitive perception is a fast mapping process relying on parameters like frequency of structures and lexical items, which may lead to editing in the transcription process, while local transcribers also have opinions about how things should be said and may introduce their own revisions. Marten and Petzell's study shows the importance of a detailed documentation of the transcription process, allowing for an evidence-based verification of the original recording. The dynamics of the interaction between these three texts provides a detailed picture of linguistic variation in Kagulu and of how speakers may use and exploit it. The example shows that looking at different versions of a text, and their history, enables us to develop a richer picture, not

only of the particular language under scrutiny, but also of the multilingual context and the dynamics of language contact and variation within which its speakers are embedded.

**3. CONCLUSIONS.** Taking the studies reported and their theoretical and methodological implications at face value, the major theme that emerges is that the way languages are used, codes are switched and words are borrowed is influenced by many factors, which may not necessarily match the assumptions made by the prevailing perspective of our linguistic discipline (such as power, prestige and personal gain). Arguing against the idea that it is appropriate to document a “language” as a single entity divorced from its broader cultural context, the authors show that approaching this picture on the basis of a careful ethnographic approach, particularly in the African context of complex language ecologies and multilingual repertoires that flourish at both a societal and an individual level, will allow us to come to a much more sophisticated understanding of language endangerment and of the reasons why shift or stability may occur in a given community.

All of the contributors to this volume are practitioners of language documentation who emphasise the richness of what can be learnt from an ethnographic approach, from understanding certain usages of a lexical item to understanding language use, change and shift in a particular context. Such an approach has been articulated as best practice from the very beginnings of language documentation, but its application to African linguistic cultures calls for a paradigm shift in how we think about the scope (and depth) of a language documentation project: their perspective has broader implications for language policies and maintenance programmes, while also affecting how we plan our research at a community level, what we record, and how we focus the scope of our research down to the achievable levels of a practical (fundable) documentation project.

There is ample evidence that similar situations of pervasive multilingualism existed (and in many cases exist) worldwide. This richness of human cultural and linguistic diversity is brought into focus by the emerging approaches represented by the Africanists writing in this volume.

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# Pure fiction – the interplay of indexical and essentialist language ideologies and heterogeneous practices A view from Agnack<sup>1</sup>

Friederike Lüpke  
*SOAS, University of London*

This paper investigates the complex interplay between different sets of language ideologies and multilingual practice in a village in Lower Casamance (Senegal). In this heterogeneous linguistic environment, which is typical of many African settings, individuals have large and adaptive linguistic repertoires. The local language ideologies focus on different aspects of identity which languages serve to index, but enable individuals to focus on different facets of identity according to context. National language ideologies are essentialist and have as their goal to put constructed homogeneous communities on the polyglossic map of Senegalese languages. In contrast to similarly essential Western ideologies, however, these national ideologies operating in Senegal are not linked to actual standard language practices. Using the example of individuals in two households and by presenting rich ethnographic information on them, the paper explores the relationship between language use and language ideologies before describing a sampling method for documenting language use in these contexts. It is argued that the documentation of these contexts cannot be achieved independently of an understanding of the language ideologies at work, as they influence what is presented as linguistic practice, and that arriving at a holistic description and documentation of the multilingual settings of Africa and beyond is central for advancing linguistic theory in sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics and contact linguistics.

**1. SETTING THE SCENE.** Senegal, a West African country with ca. 14 million inhabitants, is moderately multilingual by African standards. The number of named languages

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<sup>1</sup> The research reported in this paper took place as part of two externally funded projects led by me. The first was the language documentation project ‘Pots, plants and people – a documentation of Baïnouk knowledge systems’ funded by the DoBeS programme of the VW Foundation from 2010 to 2013. The second project is the Leverhulme Research Leadership Award Project “At the crossroads – investigating the unexplored side of multilingualism from 2014 to 2019. The generous support of both funders is gratefully acknowledged, as is the precious input from all project members and research participants. I thank in particular the Mané families in Agnack Grand – Dominic, Hortense, Jules-Bernard, Pierrot, Benjamin and René Mané and Meta Diandy, Theodora Sagna and Jacqueline Biai. Without Alpha Naby Mané, my main consultant from Agnack Petit, it would have been impossible to make sense of most things. The DoBeS project members, Amadou Kane Beye, Alexander Cobbinah, Cheikh Daouda Diatta and Moustapha Sall have all centrally contributed not only to the research but also to developing new ways of thinking about the multilingual settings of Casamance. In addition, exchanges with Pierpaolo di Carlo, Jeff Good and Mandana Seyfeddinipur were extremely fruitful in conceptualising multilingual language documentation. Finally, I thank Anne Storch and two anonymous reviewers for their very insightful and constructive comments on the first version of this paper.

given for this country has been quantified most recently as 38 by the Ethnologue (Lewis, Simons & Fennig 2014), but is of course impossible to pin down, since named languages are changeable socio-political constructs, not objective entities. Different social processes can lead to the status of a named language; in the current political climate of Senegal, more and more languages acquire this through a process of standardisation culminating in their receiving the status of ‘national language’, with very few actual consequences. In the shadow of these officially acknowledged languages, there is great linguistic diversity characterised by fluidity and the absence of clear boundaries for varieties spoken in continuous spaces. All Senegalese people are multilingual, with oral repertoires being much larger than written repertoires. The official language, French, the language of the former colonial power, occupies little space in spoken communication, but dominates official settings and most written contexts in the Latin script. Another language that has little or no presence as a spoken language but holds great prestige and is very present in writing is Arabic, the language of Islam, to which 95% of the Senegalese population adhere. The Arabic script is widely used to write those Senegalese languages in the sphere of influence of Islam, among them Wolof (see Mc Laughlin 2001, Lüpke & Bao-Diop 2014). Wolof, Pular and Mandinka, all of which are named languages but exhibit great variation within themselves, are at the same time languages of wider communication with important translocal speaker bases. Languages with smaller speaker bases are in use throughout the country, but one region stands out for its particularly high linguistic diversity and the number of small, multilingual communities. This region, the natural region of Lower Casamance (corresponding to the administrative region of Ziguinchor), is the focus of this paper. Casamance is host to a high number of named languages. Most of them, just like the languages of wider communication Wolof and Pular, belong to the Atlantic grouping of languages, whose status as genetic or areal, and their internal division, is currently being debated (Lüpke forthcoming a). To this grouping belong the languages of the Joola and Baïnounk clusters which will feature prominently in this paper, both of them having clear genetic relationships within the clusters, and other Casamance languages<sup>2</sup> and language clusters such as Balant, Manjak and Mankanya. Typologically very different and belonging to the Mande family is Mandinka, a language with a large speaker base that also has an important role as a lingua franca and language of Islam in Casamance. Finally, a Portuguese-based Creole is spoken throughout Casamance and adjoining Guinea Bissau. The scope of Creole includes both in-group and inter-group communication.

Many of the smaller languages of this region are conceptualised as languages belonging to one village. This ideology, described by Good (2012) and Good and Di Carlo (ms.) as localist and indexing (rather than as comprising a complete identity in an essentialist fashion) for another West African setting in Cameroon, is evident in the practice of naming languages as the language of X, X standing for a particular location – for instance (Joola) Banjal as the (Joola) language of Banjal, or (Baïnounk) Guñaamolo as the (Baïnounk) language of Niamone. As Cobbinah (2013) notes, the adequate interpretation of this naming strategy in terms of linguistic practice is to read the glossonyms as meaning not ‘the languages of X’

<sup>2</sup> All languages of Senegal have translocal speaker bases. When I offer geographical locations for languages I am referring to the place with which they are identified according to their ideological ‘home base’.

but ‘one of the languages of X’. Other named languages are not linked through their names to precise locations; to these belong Balant, Mandinka, (Bainouk) Gujaher, (Joola) Eegimaa and others. Most villages are habitually associated with one language as the language of the locality. However, it would be fallacious to conclude from these naming strategies that one language has ever dominated them or that their inhabitants or groups of them have been or are monolingual in this language. These spaces are not (and probably never were) inhabited by monolingual speech communities. Rather, they are as heterogeneous and multilingual as urban spaces. If the ideologies foreground one language of these heterogeneous spaces as being *the* local language, this appears due to longstanding ‘landlord-stranger’ relationships regulating settlement patterns of the typically decentralised groups in the area (Brooks 1994). According to these practices, one group, often consisting of the founding clan of a village, takes nominal ownership of the associated land and accommodates strangers by ceding them land. These ‘strangers’ can become very settled, but are not treated on a par in political terms, and this is reflected in the widespread strategy of naming languages.

Just as places are tied to particular languages in ideological fashion and do not reflect the real linguistically complex settings, so do individuals foreground one or two languages of their repertoires as what I call their ‘identity language’. In some contexts, these languages are the identity language(s) of the father (sometimes with the mother’s identity language(s) added). Although identity languages sometimes correspond to the languages spoken most, they are never the exclusive mother tongues, as there is no such thing as monolingual language acquisition in Senegal. Rather, identity languages can index affiliation with a certain group, but group membership is crucially not dependent on linguistic behaviour. In addition, there is ample evidence that ‘identity’ languages are changeable according to the context and the alliance desired, just like the ethnic identity they can be said to instantiate (see Foucher 2005 on ethnicity as a changeable and political concept in Casamance).

These language ideologies are of course rooted in the sociocultural context of the area. The history of Casamance and Senegambia is one of continuous contact between mobile, decentralised groups based on extended families or clans (Hawthorne 2003; Bühnen 1994; Brooks 1993; Wright 1985, 2010), and not all encounters have resulted in the peaceful hosting of strangers. Migration, conflict, raids, including slave raids, religious – and most recently independence and secessionist – wars and proselytising have left traces throughout the entire area and often caused decimation, displacement and assimilation of both smaller and larger groups. Assimilation can have a complete incorporation of another group or of individuals as its outcome, as historically through the integration of captives into a community, or it can happen partially and gradually, in actual cultural and linguistic practices or proclaimed features of identity and at the individual level. Crucially, assimilation is not always unidirectional but often can be reversed entirely or in parts at any time and depending on individual circumstances. At the same time, the vulnerability and small size of groups which are based on extended families that characterise the area has necessitated the creation of a number of strategies for exchange and alliance. These social strategies have been described in detail in chapter 2 of Lüpke and Storch (2013) and comprise exogamous marriage practices, child fostering, and particular patterns of ritually, economically and religiously motivated multilingualism. They are not typical of Casamance only, but of many multilingual places in Africa, in particular at the African frontier (Kopytoff 1987), where they constitute important survival techniques (see



Di Carlo, this volume, for a discussion of a Cameroonian setting). As a result of its social history, present-day Casamance presents a mosaic of linguistic and cultural diversity. This mosaic can be studied from the perspective of language – in terms of lexical and structural language contact – but only reveals its full dynamics, motivations and causes at the level of speakers. These speakers act as gendered members of – mostly small, family-based – groups but also as individual agents adapting to structural factors in their surroundings.

This paper, therefore, presents a snapshot of language use at the micro-level, based on ethnographic observations allowing some preliminary interpretation of language use before linking it to larger patterns. Using a case study, I<sup>3</sup> introduce the (present and absent) members of two households in a small village in Casamance and discuss their linguistic biographies and concomitant repertoires. I then turn to two different types of language ideologies and discuss how and why they are aligned or misaligned with the linguistic practices of different groups and individuals. I end the paper by describing the methods I used for documenting these complex settings and by outlining the challenges and opportunities they present for linguistic research, and the question they beg for a conceptualisation of language and language use in multilingual contexts.

**2. WELCOME TO AGNACK.** Agnack is a village 18 km to the east of Ziguinchor, the capital of the region with the same name, on national road 6. It is situated in the lowlands close to the tidal Casamance River and one of its arms or *marigots*, called *cinda* in Baïnouk Gujaher. The village is surrounded by rice fields, palm groves and salt marshes, criss-crossed by creeks and swamps. Agnack is divided into two parts, Agnack Grand (‘Big Agnack’) and Agnack Petit (‘Little Agnack’) with some smaller wards, including Aringala and Asimiou. Ironically, Agnack Grand constitutes the smaller part of the village today, although it is the original point of settlement. According to oral history, it was founded by the great-grandfather of the current village chief, Jules Bernard Mané, who came with his family from nearby Sangaj to settle here. When the road from Ziguinchor to Kolda was built, inhabitants of Agnack Grand gradually started to move their houses<sup>4</sup> close to the *goudron* (tarmac), a movement that was exacerbated by the construction of a power line running alongside the road. Since Agnack Petit, in contrast to Agnack Grand, is connected to the electricity grid and the transport and communication network constituted by the road, it continues to be very attractive to new settlers and has increased in size over the years. Agnack Grand, in contrast, with only solar street lamps, offering the most rudimentary modern infrastructure, has many abandoned compounds to testify to its position at the margins of modern facilities. Figure 1 offers a map of the village with the households of Agnack Grand.

Life in Agnack Petit is very cosmopolitan, and all the major languages of Casamance

<sup>3</sup> Whenever I use the first person singular, I report my individual research, which is the focus of this paper. The occasional use of the first person plural signalises that I refer to experiences or observations made by several team members of the two collaborative projects I am leading.

<sup>4</sup> As Wright (1999) reminds us, houses and entire villages (but not shrines at which ancestors are worshipped) are and have been very mobile. They are made of mud, with thatched, or more recently, tin roofs and can be built by a family during one dry season. People take down and rebuild their houses in regular intervals because they don’t withstand the heavy rains for long. This temporary character of dwellings makes it easy to move compounds or entire villages in order to avoid conflicts or benefit from better agricultural conditions, defence positions, electricity, and so on.

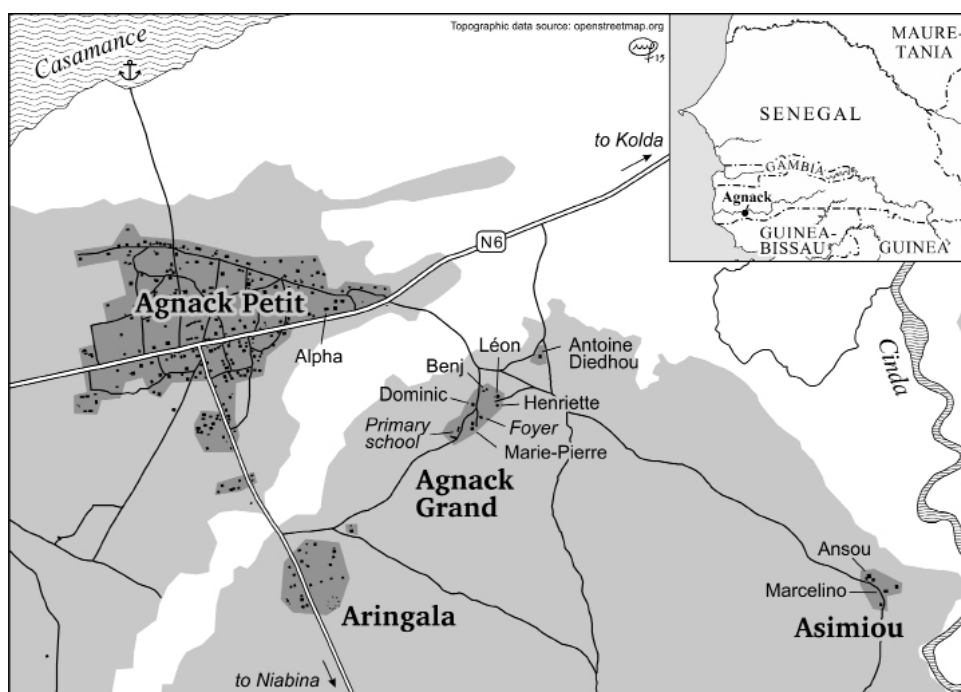


FIGURE 1. Map of Agnack, with the households of Agnack Grand marked

and Senegal (and beyond) are spoken there. This is due to the fact that alongside the already complex configuration of Casamance languages present there, civil servants, in particular teachers, from all over the country have been appointed to posts in the village. For a long time, Agnack Petit had a military post, likewise inducing linguistic diversity through the profiles of the soldiers posted there, and there is still a military post close to the Aringala ward of Agnack Petit. The most recent influx of newcomers is constituted by a large contingent of Malian fishermen and their families, attracted by the rich fishing grounds of the Casamance River, and bringing in the Mande language Bambara.

Agnack Grand presents a somewhat reduced linguistic complexity, with ‘only’ six to eight languages routinely offered as parts of the repertoires of its inhabitants, who live in seven households.<sup>5</sup> In addition to Baïnouk Gujaher, ‘the’ language of both parts of the village according to the localist language ideology, Joola Susaana is spoken by refugees from Guinea Bissau (‘chez Antoine Diedhou’), and the descendants of Jalonke-speaking immigrants from Guinea in a household in the Asimiou of Agnack Grand (‘chez Ansou’), who speak rudiments of this language. Balant, Manjak, Pepel, Joola Fogny and Joola Kasa, Wolof, Creole, Gugècer, French and sometimes Pular are present as well, in addition to other languages not spoken by many people. Most people assume complex ethnolinguistic identities, parts of which are inherited from the father. These identities can be given with differing levels of

<sup>5</sup> No attempt at counting the inhabitants of the village is made here. The number of inhabitants is in constant flux, as will become evident from the detailed discussion of two households in §3.

granularity and are not monolithic but are highly adaptive according to context. Crucially, identities are not dependent on mother tongue(s) or languages spoken, although speaking a certain language in a certain context can serve to index a particular facet of identity.

**3. FOCUS ON TWO HOUSEHOLDS IN AGNACK GRAND.** The – to most outsiders invisible – complex sociolinguistic setting of Agnack Grand will be discussed through a snapshot study of two of its seven households. The first systematic collection of sociolinguistic and ethnographic data was obtained through interviews there<sup>6</sup> in 2013. These semi-structured interviews were preceded and followed by participant observation from 2010 to 2015, lending the observations reported here a minimal time depth. The households were chosen because they are the ones that hosted other project members and myself during several field stays, a circumstance that facilitated building personal relationships and allowed for participant observation of daily interactions, so that rich information on the inhabitants, their personal histories and their networks is available.

The real names of participants are given, for the following reasons: first and foremost, the participants of my research in Agnack are unanimous in wanting their story to be told. Most of the personal information presented here has already been made public in a documentary film on multilingualism in Agnack Grand that was created as part of a research training scheme and has already been screened in Agnack Grand to great public acclaim.<sup>7</sup> Secondly, all names – first names and surnames, but also the multiple nicknames individuals bear – have a social significance whose extent and exact meaning is far from being fully clear to me as a linguist and outsider (see also Sagna this volume). One very visible meaning expressed through first names is the religious affiliation of their bearers. First names of French or Portuguese provenance signify Christianity; names of Arabic origin denote adherence to Islam; and in many communities, names predating these recent newcomer creeds exist that are tied to the local religions and customs (see Sagna (this volume) for examples from a Joola community and Cobbinah (2013) for examples from the Baïnouk Gubëher community of Djibonker). First names also indicate special links to family members or friends: children are never named freely but always after a relative or important friend of the family. Sharing a name or being somebody's *homonyme* in French expresses and creates a special social relationship but also results in the recurrence of identical names. For this reason, nicknames are important in order to differentiate between holders of the same name. Less immediately decodable aspects of meaning exist as well, for instance name changes of women induced as part of the fertility ritual called *kañaleen* or *gañ(ñ)alen* in Joola languages (see also Sagna this volume) and *gubos* in Baïnouk Gujaher, where women are removed from their habitual context and receive the clan names and identities of their hosts in order to make them invisible to evil spirits

<sup>6</sup> Findings for the four households not presented here have partly been discussed in chapter 2 of Lüpke & Storch (2013).

<sup>7</sup> This documentary, *Kanraxël – the confluence of Agnack*, was created by Remigiusz and Anna Sowa, two filmmakers who participated in the AHRC Collaborative Skills Development Scheme 'Language research and teaching in a multilingual world' organised by Mandana Seyfeddinipur and myself and shot in Agnack Grand to paint a vivid portrait of multilingual life unfolding over seven days during which the village prepares for a major ceremony. See <http://www.kanraxelfilm.co.uk/> for more information.

(see Lüpke and Storch 2013: 24–28). Using code names or aliases for the purposes of this article would result in discarding the social information conveyed by the names, or creating misleading names carrying different or conflicting meanings because of factors unknown to me. Finally, I am offering the detailed information on individuals here in order to allow for follow-up studies with the potential of identifying long-term trends regarding, for instance, mobility patterns, changes in language use and ideologies throughout an individual's lifespan, marriage patterns and their influence on multilingual settings, etc. Obscuring the identity of my research participants would rule out these possibilities for future research. Research participants have provided informed consent to participate in the research on several occasions in a culturally adequate format. In addition, there is a unanimous feeling of wanting to become visible and acknowledged as multilingual speakers of Bañounk, shared by all the individuals who took part in the documentation project of which this paper presents some results. This is due to the socio-historical context and language ideologies discussed in detail in §4.

**3.1 ‘CHEZ DOMINIC’.**<sup>8</sup> The first household presented here is the one labelled as ‘Chez Dominic’. Until his death in January 2012, Dominic Mané, a grandson of the village founder, was the village chief and head of household. His paternal grandfather came from Sangaj, a now abandoned village about 30km from Agnack in present-day Guinea Bissau.<sup>9</sup> Since his death, his son Jules-Bernard Mané has taken over the role of head of family and, more recently, also that of village chief.

Dominic was married to Hortense Diandy who continues to live in the household. She comes from Agnack, from the ward of Aringala. Dominic and Hortense had nine children together, two of whom died in childhood and one as an adult. Only two of the children live in Agnack Grand in their parents' house, following the patrilineal and virilocal settlement pattern. These are two of Hortense's and Dominic's sons, Jules-Bernard Mané and Pierre Mané. All the other children of the couple live in Dakar. They are now introduced by order of birth.

Jules Mané, the oldest son, follows the firstborn, Marie, who died young. He lives in Agnack Grand in his father's house and is married to Theodoria Sagna. She comes from Etomé, a village to the west of Ziguinchor, and speaks Bayot as her identity language, but has had hardly any chance to speak it until the recent arrival of an adoptive daughter. Jules and Theodoria have one son together, Pascal (aka Neene Tuuti or Keba). Pascal speaks Gujaher, Wolof, Creole, French and Mandinka. Theodoria mostly speaks to her son and

<sup>8</sup> The labels for the households in figure 1 were given by Pierre Mané, who drew a map for me, and they are kept here for easy reference. The information on members of Dominic's household was given by himself, a couple of weeks before he died, and complemented and updated through continuous participant observation.

<sup>9</sup> As is the case throughout Africa, where arbitrary borders were created by the colonial powers during the Africa Conference in Berlin 1884–1885, national borders cross-cut linguistic and social spaces. In the case of the south of Casamance, this has resulted in settlements of related clans and closely affiliated groups being located in two different countries with two different official language policies. Guinea Bissau, a former Portuguese colony, is lusophone, with Portuguese as its language of education, whereas Senegal, formerly part of *l'Afrique Occidentale Française*, uses French in official and educational domains.

the other women in the household in Wolof, although she also speaks Gujaher. Theodoria also has a daughter from before her marriage, who lives in Oussouye. In 2014, Jules and Theodoria adopted a little girl, Alida Bassène, who also comes from Etomé. Alida speaks Bayot and Wolof and is learning Gujaher. For the first time since the beginning of my research, Theodoria has occasion to speak Bayot and is visibly enjoying it. Officially, Alida is not speaking Bayot, at least according to Jules: as an adoptive child, her only concern is to learn Gujaher as quickly as possible.

Between Jules and the fourth-born child Pascal, Hortense and Dominic had Mathieu, who died at the age of seven. Pascal Mané lives in Dakar, where he was raised as a foster child. He is married to Irène Byasi, a speaker of Mankanya. He does not speak much Gujaher, and his wife does not speak it at all. They have two young children, Dominic and Salvador, who do not speak Gujaher but are learning Mankanya, Wolof and French. They come to Agnack Grand occasionally for holidays, important ceremonies or business. It is impressive to observe these visits, as they totally change the language dynamics of the household for their duration. When Irène came to stay for a couple of weeks with one of her sons, everybody moved completely to speaking Wolof in order to accommodate these visitors who did not speak Gujaher.

The next child in line is Yvonne Mané, who also lives in Dakar, where she grew up. She is married to Clément Basse, a speaker of Manjak. Their two children, Mamisou and Dominic, speak French and Wolof but neither Gujaher nor Manjak.

Rose Mané lives in Dakar but grew up with her parents in Agnack Grand. She speaks Bainounk Gujaher. She is not married and has one daughter, Yvonne Mané, who is growing up with her, speaking Gujaher, Wolof, Creole and French.

Pierre (aka Pierrot) Mané is married to Jacqueline Biaï and lives in his father's household in Agnack Grand. Jacqueline comes from neighbouring Guinea Bissau, from a village not far from Sao Domingos, called Sonk, which is associated with Gujaher and Gugècer. Jacqueline presents both these languages as her identity languages, and also speaks them. Together, they have three young children, Prospère, Marianne and Justine (aka Mamaatina). The oldest child was born in 2005, the middle one in 2007 and the youngest in 2010. Pierre and Jacqueline have a foster child, Emily Sadio (aka Yombe), who is the daughter of Jacqueline's older sister. She was fostered with Jacqueline to help her with her younger children and came to the village at the age of five. Yombe's identity is given as Pepel, but she has hardly had the occasion to use this language since her arrival in Agnack, and it is fading away and making place for Gujaher and the other languages of her new environment. In 2014, her father came to check on her. Since she is fostered and not permanently adopted, it is possible that she will return to her agnatic family in the future, and then she would undoubtedly grow back into Pepel.

Until October 2013, Prospère lived in Agnack Grand with his parents. In October that year, at the age of seven, he moved to Dakar where he now lives with a member of his mother's family. He has an eye problem and her relative knows an ophthalmologist who they hope will be able to look after him. Between October 2013 and April 2014, his parents saw him once. When I enquired about his language repertoire during my latest stay in Agnack in 2015, I was told that he has forgotten all his Gujaher and that his parents now speak Wolof with him when they talk to him on the phone.

Pierre is followed by Marianne Mané who lives in Dakar and is married to Jacques

[family name unknown], a speaker of Sereer. They have three children, Hilaire, Charles and Jean-Clément, who do not speak Gujaher but speak Sereer, French and Wolof.

Leontina Mané died after having had a daughter, Rose Mbinky, who lives in Dakar. She speaks Gujaher, Joola Fogny, Wolof, Mandinka, Creole and French.

Hortense Diandy, the widow of the late Dominic Mané, has a foster son, Jean-François Biai (aka Fanfo), who sometimes lives in Agnack Grand, where he has a room in the household. He is married to Odette Diandy, a sister of Meta Diandy at ‘Chez Benj’ (see 3.2 below). Like her sister, she comes from Kanjandy in Guinea Bissau and is a speaker of Gugëcer and Gujaher. Odette used to live in Dominic’s household but moved back to Kanjandy with her baby in 2012. Fanfo speaks Gujaher, French, Wolof, Mandinka, Creole and Joola Fogny. He spent most of 2013 commuting between Ziguinchor and Agnack Grand but recently moved to Kanjandy to re-join his wife. They have two children, Domingo and a new baby born in 2012, and now only come to Agnack for big ceremonies.

All adult members of the household who were living in Agnack during the period covered by the research are fluent in Baïnounk Gujaher, Mandinka, Wolof, Creole and Joola Fogny, and many have knowledge of additional Joola varieties and of Manjak, Mankanya, Balant and Pepel. For the men, Gujaher was given as their identity language in the local context. I have refrained from listing all languages in all cases, because the self-reported repertoires offer little basis for comparison, as they can mean different things according to the contexts in which these languages have been used throughout their speaker’s life. The men additionally speak (and write) French. Dominic belongs to the generations who grew up before schools were built in the village, but as the son of the village chief he was made to attend school by the French colonial administrators.<sup>10</sup> Hortense, like all women of her generation, did not go to school and hence learnt neither French nor to read and write this or any other language. The younger women all attended school for at least three to four years and have mastered the respective official languages of their countries: oral and written French in Theodoria’s case, oral and written Portuguese in Jacqueline’s case. Jacqueline has informally learnt to speak French since her arrival in Agnack, although she does not include it in her self-reported repertoire.

Theodoria speaks Bayot, a language related to Joola but not belonging to this cluster, because she grew up in an area where it is spoken. Jacqueline also speaks Gugëcer (Kas-sanga), a language closely related to Gujaher and often seen as part of ‘Baïnounk’ by members of both groups. Regarding the women’s declared identity languages, Hortense univocally gives Gujaher as hers. Jacqueline variously gives Gugëcer or Gujaher as her identity languages. Although she speaks Gujaher and is married to an Ujaher, Theodoria never gives her identity language as Gujaher and is not seen as an Ujaher by others, but remains Bayot.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Rather than as an educational opportunity, this must be understood as the traumatic and forced removal of the sons of dignitaries from their parents in order to turn them into compliant colonial subjects in French boarding schools.

<sup>11</sup> It constitutes an interesting question for future research why Theodoria is the only woman in Agnack Grand who remains so unabsorbed by her husband’s Gujaher identity. One factor may be that Gujaher and Bayot are only very remotely related; another, that Bayot does not feature in the linguistic ecology of Agnack in a productive way. No other Bayot-speaking women have been married into the village.



**3.2 ‘CHEZ BENJ’.**<sup>12</sup> Benjamin Mané’s household is next door to ‘chez Dominic’. Dominic Mané and Antoine Mané, Benjamin’s deceased father, were brothers. After his father’s death, Benjamin, as the eldest son, became the head of the family. His mother, Martine Coly, passed away, but his step-mother, Tida Sadio, (his father’s second wife) lives with them. Antoine was born in Agnack; Tida comes from Bijingen, a village in Guinea Bissau where Gujaher/Gugëcer speakers cohabit with Manjak. Martine Coly and Antoine Mané had six children together: Benjamin, Cécile, René, Jean, Sougounda and Berthe. Of these, only Benjamin and René live in Agnack Grand.

Benjamin is married to Nafissatou Meta Diandy, known as Meta, who comes from Kanjandy, a village in Guinea Bissau that regroups speakers of Gujaher and Gugëcer (Meta and Odette Biai, who used to live in Dominic’s household, are sisters). Meta is one of the very few Muslims in Agnack Grand. As head of the household, Benjamin lives in his late father’s house. He used to be a taxi driver in Dakar, where he met Meta and where their first children were born, and then in Ziguinchor. Later he ran out of luck and had to retire to the village.

Benjamin and Meta have the following children: Martine, Marie (aka Sansi or Ndeie Tuuti), Lucie (aka Mame Boi), Madeleine and Jean. As visible from their Christian first names, the children have at least officially taken their father’s religion, as is customary.

All the children, with the exception of Martine Mané, the oldest, live with their parents. Benjamin had to give Martine to his sister Cécile who lives in Boufan Badiane, because she did not have children until late in her marriage and claimed her. Martine Mané is growing up in a household where Gujaher is not spoken. Therefore, she speaks better Creole than Gujaher, but she speaks Gujaher as well. One house of the compound is inhabited by a number of foster children. They are: Louis Coly, Landing Biai, Moussa Biai, Bakary Biai and Chérif Diandy. Louis Coly is the son of Albert Coly (the younger brother of Martine Coly, Benjamin’s mother) and of Yassinen Sangnan. Landing, Moussa and Bakary Biai are the sons of Oumar Biai, who now lives in Samik and is the oldest son of Tida Sadio (Antoine Mané’s second wife) and Gomis Biai. Gomis Biai is a Gujaher from Sonk, in Guinea Bissau. The second son of Tida and Gomis is Ansou Biai. Both Oumar and Ansou grew up in Sonk and later joined their mother for a while in Agnack Grand. The children of Oumar Biai and Awa Sadio live in Agnack with their grandmother Tida because of the *collège* – there is no secondary school in Samik, where their parents live. Soon, at least those of them who want to do their A levels will have to move to nearby Niaguiss, where the *lycée* is located, and where they will board with a local family during the week. Chérif Diandy’s mother is Cécile Mané, Benjamin’s younger sister, and his father is Salif Diandy, presented to me as having Gujaher as his identity language. Chérif was born in Dakar and his mother was not married to his father. He now lives with his uncle Benjamin because his mother has married another man and lives with him in Boufan Badiane.

Antoine Mané’s and Martine Coly’s second-born, Cécile Mané, is now married and lives in Boufan Badiane with Benjamin’s firstborn daughter Martine.

René Mané, the third-born son of Martine Coly and Antoine Mané, lives with his older

<sup>12</sup> The information on this household was given by Benjamin Mané and complemented by participant observation and interviews with other household members.

brother Benjamin in his father's compound. He is married to Madeleine Coly, an Ujaher from Niaguiss who also lives there. They have one son, Antoine Adansi Mané, who lives with his mother in Niaguiss.

The fourth in line is Jean Mané (son of Martine Coly and Antoine Mané and *homonyme* of Benjamin's youngest son), who lives in Dakar. He has a child with Fatoumata Gomis, a son called Antoine Mané, to whom he speaks Gujaher.

Sougounda Mané, the fifth child of Martine Coly and Antoine Mané, is in Dakar. He is not married and has no children. He speaks only a little Gujaher, because he was fostered at the age of 5 by Marie-Louise Coly, a sister of Antoine Mané senior's mother.

Berthe Mané is the last-born. She now lives in Dakar and speaks Gujaher fluently. She has one son with Paul Mané, Jean Mané. Father and son live in France and have lost their Gujaher, according to Benjamin.

Mariama Diandy also lives in the household. She is a niece of Meta Diandy and was fostered into the village<sup>13</sup> from Kanjandy to look after the children at the age of five. Mariama had a baby in 2013, a girl called Monique Diassi. Mariama is a Muslim, but her daughter is at least nominally a Christian.

Hortense Diedhou is another fostered child in the household. She was brought in from Sindone, where her parents, Jean Diedhiou (a Joola Fogny) and Cécile Bajinka (a speaker of Gujaher) live, in order to look after René Mané's son Antoine. Although Antoine now lives with his mother in Niaguiss, Hortense remains in Agnack Grand. Nominally a Joola Fogny, she speaks fluent Gujaher.

From 2009 to 2013, there was a teenager with a Pular background visiting, Babacar Baldé, from Dakar. He is the son of a friend of Benjamin, and he spoke Gujaher and Wolof, but not his declared identity language, Pular. He had left by 2014, but another young boy was there as a long-term visitor from Sindone, and had just started to pick up a little Gujaher.

All the men in the household presented Gujaher to me as their identity language, and they also speak this language. In addition, they speak Mandinka, Wolof, Creole and Joola Fogny, to various levels of proficiency, often complemented with other important Casamance languages like Balant, Manjak, Mankanya, etc. The men additionally speak (and write a little) French. For the women, the main variation lies, as for those 'chez Dominic', in their native country and consequent language of education, if they had any. All the women, with the exception of Tida Sadio and Meta Diandy, had access to formal education in Senegal. Therefore, they also have varying competences in French (depending on the length and quality of schooling). Meta and Tida have no formal education and hence neither literacy skills nor knowledge of a colonial language. They are also the only ones to speak Gugëcer (Kassanga), because they grew up in Kanjandy where both languages are spoken. In contrast, Mariama, who also comes from Kanjandy, has no knowledge of Gugëcer since she did not grow up there and was not exposed to it in Agnack. All children and teenagers in the household speak Gujaher, apart from the most recent incoming foster child, although it is not the declared identity language of all of them. Women exhibit greater variation in declaring their identity languages than men, giving either the identity languages of their fathers or of their husbands.

<sup>13</sup> See chapter 2 of Lüpke & Storch (2013) for a summary of research on and an overview of the manifold motivations for the widespread practice of child fostering in African societies.

#### 4. THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES IN MULTILINGUAL CASAMANCE

**4.1 LEVELS OF GRANULARITY.** Despite the multilingual context of Casamance, every individual is able to give one or several ethnic identities and name one or several identity languages upon request. Which aspect of identity is expressed in the usually selective answers depends on the context – the location, the interlocutor, and whether one wishes to signal distance or proximity to a particular identity. The extent to which these proclaimed identities are matched by parts of the linguistic repertoire is a matter of life experience, which is highly gendered, as well as childhood environment and mobility. There are also different levels of detail available for ethnolinguistic identities, and I will start by looking at those and the ideologies they convey before offering a more detailed look at men, women and children in turn.

When I was interviewing research participants about their identity in French, one of the most frequent statements I heard uttered was “*Je suis Baïnouk*”, often completed by “*Je parle le baïnouk*”.<sup>14</sup> Strikingly, it is impossible to translate these statements into individual Baïnouk languages, because there is no equivalent of the hyperonym Baïnouk (see Lüpke 2010; Lüpke and Storch 2013; Cobbinah 2010, 2013 for detailed treatments of this issue). While ethno- and glossonyms like (Ba)nyun and Baïnouk in various spelling variants can be found in Portuguese sources from the early 16th century onwards, the different Baïnouk languages do not have a superordinate term for all the varieties of this cluster. Only the individual languages are named. The label Baïnouk is most likely of Mande origin. It has in the past been used by outsiders to regroup communities that have been separate, without direct contact, for at least the past four to five hundred years. Baïnouk in all likelihood constituted loosely connected groups with very different patterns of settlement and social organisation before (Bühnen 1994).<sup>15</sup> The exact extension is as unclear as the etymology of the term.<sup>16</sup> So, what does it mean when a speaker of

<sup>14</sup> French convention distinguishes between ethnonyms and glossonyms by setting the former with an initial capital letter.

<sup>15</sup> The label Joola, for another group with considerable diversity at its interior, is much younger than the label Baïnouk and most likely owes its existence to French colonial administrators (Thomas 1959).

<sup>16</sup> The label (Gu-)Nyun or Guñun is most often used to refer to the Baïnouk languages, whereas the term Banyun generally designates the speakers. This invites us to read *gu-ñun* as a glossonym that can be derived to designate the people by prefixing *ba-*, by analogy to, e.g. *a-lant* ‘a (Balant person)’ *ba-lant* ‘(Balant) persons’, which is very reminiscent of the *ba-* prefix in Bantu. However, this apparent couplet is a red herring, at least synchronically: none of the Baïnouk languages has a prefix *ba-* that forms a human plural. The prefix *ba-* is attested, but as a collective for non-animate entities. In Baïnouk languages, *gu-/ha-* is the noun class paradigm used for languages; whereas *u-/ñan-*, one of the human paradigms, is used to derive their speakers, e.g. *gu-jaher* ‘Jaher language’, *gu-lëb* language’, *ha-lëb* ‘languages’ and *u-jaher* ‘Jaher person’, *ñan-jaher* ‘Jaher persons’. Joola languages also have a collective prefix *ba-*, which is likewise unattested with human plurals. Lespinay (1987: 24) asserts that the communities speaking ‘*Guñun de l’ouest*’, comprising the communities of Niamone and Djibonker, are the ones that use the label Nün, but we have not been able to confirm this with any of the speakers we have encountered. The root *ñu(u)n* means ‘west’ in a number of Baïnouk languages. Cobbinah (2013: 33, footnote) reports that in Djibonker, *gu-ñuun*, literally ‘the language of the west’, denotes the language spoken to the west of Djibonker – Bayot. To add yet more confusion, Guñun is also the glossonym used by the Baïnouk community of Djifanghor to

Gujaher, Gubêcher or Guñaamolo calls him- or herself a Baïnouk? There are two options available, and both are variably used by the same individuals. The minimal claim entailed is that one belongs to a group speaking a Baïnouk language or that one uses it as an identity language, i.e. that one is an Ujaher, Ubêcher, etc. The maximal claim is that one belongs to the overarching group uniting all the different Baïnouk languages. This claim is very vague and elastic, as most research participants are not aware of all the Baïnouk languages – the moribund Gambian varieties (Lepinay 1987, 1996) and the Baïnouk language of Djifanghor, to the east of Ziguinchor, are never mentioned as part of this construct by people in Agnack at least, but can be added when attention is drawn to them. In addition, for some people, the related language Gugêcer (Kassanga)<sup>17</sup> can be part of the grouping, whereas for others, the Ñangêcer are cousins or allies, not direct members. For many people, their awareness of other Baïnouk languages and their location (notwithstanding the question as to whether or not they classify as part of Baïnouk) depends on the existence of kinship ties with people from the places concerned, or on their exposure to documentation of the influential Baïnouk lobby organisation BOREPAB (*Bureau de Recherches et d'Études sur le Patrimoine Baïnouk* (described in depth in Lüpke 2010 and Lüpke & Storch 2013: 196–202). None of the Baïnouk varieties mentioned in this paper are spoken in areas that overlap or are contiguous to each other; and speakers of one Baïnouk language only very rarely speak another Baïnouk language. Bilingualism in two Baïnouk languages has so far only been attested for women marrying into another Baïnouk-speaking village. There is no mutual intelligibility between the languages; in fact, for a speaker of Gubêcher, for instance, the Gujaher of Jegui in Guinea Bissau is not even recognised as a related or Baïnouk language (Alexander Cobbinah, p.c. 2014).

For Western and Western-inspired language ideologies, concerned with boundaries (for critiques see Blommaert 2008; Irvine 2008; Irvine and Gal 1995, 2000; Bonfiglio 2010; Horst 2008), this fluidity and ambiguity of what it means to be Baïnouk may be seen as a problem; but for Casamançais, it creates many advantages by offering different possibilities for creating and negating belonging (see also Jong 1995, 1999, 2002, 2005; Smith 2006). These possibilities are not static but are constantly being adjusted to changing circumstances. In the past, the term Baïnouk most likely was only used as an exonym, and it is unclear whether it was ever linked to a linguistic group (as opposed to a social group). Baïnouk later came to have primarily negative connotations that are still alive in the collective imagination, where the Baïnouk are seen as a doomed people. They are described as having been cursed by their last king, Sira Bana Biai, whom they killed when he demanded a human sacrifice,<sup>18</sup> and they still suffer from the outcomes of this curse today. One outcome is that members of other groups do not like to marry Baïnouk or give one of their women to a Baïnouk person in marriage. In the second part of the 20th century, until very recently, a Baïnouk identity, regardless of the question of whether

designate its variety (Quint, p.c.).

<sup>17</sup> The relationship between Ñanjaher and Ñangêcer, though not necessarily holding between Ñangêcer and other Baïnouk groups, appears to go back a long time, as it has been mentioned by Portuguese sources already (Bühnen 1994), despite occasional hostilities and warfare between the two (Hair 1967).

<sup>18</sup> Bühnen (1994: 149–151) describes in detail this myth and its distribution and variation among Baïnouk, Balant and Kassanga, as well as its likely historical context.

it existed, was not something that one publicly asserted, but was an identity confined to insiders. The tide started to turn and the label started to take on a definitely linguistic flavour when new essentialist language ideologies became *en vogue* at the national level from the 1980s onwards, in the wake of a growing political instrumentalisation of ethnic identities (Smith 2006) that was flanked by the emergence of discourses of language endangerment. As part of this movement, the BOREPAB was created and remains active till today. It is important to stress in this context that BOREPAB was created as a diaspora organisation of an urban elite and remains active mainly at this level. Therefore, BOREPAB can be understood as a response to essentialist language ideologies operating at the national level. BOREPAB was instrumental in achieving the recent codification of ‘Baïnounk’ as a national language (see also Lüpke 2011). This means that this language is now one of the officially recognised languages of Senegal. In practice, this status has hardly any consequences on the use of the language in the education system (one of the rhetorical rights conveyed through the status of national language). This is not just due to the inactivity of the Senegalese state to implement these language rights, but also to the incontestable fact that there is no such thing as a ‘Baïnounk language’, since the term refers to an ideological construct not reflected by a unified standard language instantiating it.

A look at ‘Baïnounk’ television and radio broadcasts illustrates how unsuitable language is to symbolise this unified identity in the face of very different varieties. Yet, laying claims to this symbolic identity makes sense in the wider ideological environment of Senegalese languages, and therefore, these efforts continue to expand (see 4.6 for a detailed discussion). Until 2014, there were only radio broadcasts in Baïnounk languages, each having the label ‘*émission baïnounk*’ in French. In reality, the broadcast at the state radio station RTS is presented in Baïnounk Guñaamolo, the variety of its host, Moussa Bala Coly, as was the one at the private station Kassoumaye FM, also with a Guñaamolo moderator. The ‘Baïnounk’ broadcast at the private station Zig FM is in the hands of Ansou Diendiamé, a speaker of Gujaher. In 2014, a new regional TV channel, RTS 4, opened, and the ‘Baïnounk’ broadcast there is also presented by Ansou Diendiamé in Gujaher. The broadcasts are only accessible to speakers of the respective Baïnounk varieties and are listened to only by them, although they propagate a feeling of pan-Baïnounkism and contribute to the strengthening of a shared Baïnounk identity – note that both Moussa Bala Coly and Ansou Diendiamé are BOREPAB activists. In particular in the TV broadcast, as in public events, a pan-Baïnounk identity is often projected, never through language, but through visual elements of culture, often produced in folkloric settings. The claiming of masked dances and elements of material culture by particular ethnolinguistic groups is a growing tendency in the area (Jong 1999; Mark, Jong and Chupin 1998); however, in reality, the practices are shared to a large extent with all other groups of Casamance.

Just as for the linguistic aspects of identity, the cultural aspects used to create a distinct Baïnounk identity do not tally with lived practices on the ground but nevertheless serve important symbolic purposes. The following sections will investigate why this is so. Sections 4.1 to 4.3 explore language ideologies in the male-centred and gerontocratic context of Casamance and describe how they are related (or not, and why) to the language practices of different social groups and individuals. §4.4 describes what social gains are connected with rendering aspects of complex identities visible or invisible through projecting different facets according to the requirements of the context. §4.5 describes



how the local indexical (i.e. context-sensitive) identities can be misunderstood by Western observers with national essentialist language ideologies, and how Casamançais navigate the field of tension between these seemingly incompatible types of ideologies.

**4.2 POTENTIAL MATCHES BETWEEN LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES AND MALE LINGUISTIC PRACTICES.** The micro-study of the two households presented in §3 above is illustrative of a general pattern of social organisation throughout Casamance (see Linares 1992 for Joola groups and Hawthorne 2003 for Balant) that results in crucial differences in the potential for identity languages to be matched by parts of the linguistic repertoires. Societies in this region are largely patrilineal and virilocal. This means that *both* women and men inherit their father's ethnic identity and identity language but that only a subset of *men* actually remains immersed in it. These are the sons that remain in their fathers' villages (often in their fathers' compounds). Clearly, then, language ideologies are male-centred and based on the idealised scenario that sedentary men pass on a language to their sons, who do the same *ad infinitum*.

It is impossible for most men to live this language ideology, from which women are categorically excluded, in practice (see 4.2 for discussion). First of all, we have seen that children are very mobile and easily fostered for a variety of reasons. Since fostering is not limited to male children, this will be discussed in detail in §4.3 for children of both sexes. Secondly, even as adults, not all men remain in, or return to, their villages of origin. Seasonal and (semi-)permanent labour migration are very common and are by no means a recent phenomenon but a longstanding practice of young men throughout the region, and although elders have and are still attempting to counteract it (Hawthorne 2003; Jong 2007; Mark 1978, 1997), it is very widespread. Men exhibit patterns of multilingualism depending on individual trajectories and life stories just as women do, but according to gendered social practices there are often systematic differences between the two genders. So, for instance, men are far more likely to migrate to Europe than women (Heil 2013), whereas women migrate in greater numbers to urban centres like Dakar to work there as nannies and household helps (Foucher 2005). When men migrate to cities, it is mainly to find salaried work, often in the French-dominated formal sector, which exposes them much more to French than the women, in whose repertoire Wolof, the language of Dakar and *lingua franca* in many urban contexts, is more prominent. Even when they have migrated more or less permanently, men (and to a lesser extent women) will be expected to return to their agnatic villages for important ceremonies such as funerals or the initiation ceremonies that are of paramount significance. Many village- or language-based and regional associations strengthen affinities with the rural home bases, but also differ in the language ideologies they embody (see the example of the BOREPAB). But even though men in the diaspora can tap into an environment more aligned with their language ideologies from time to time, this does not necessarily mean that their linguistic repertoires will follow suit. Finally, all children, male and female, grow up in heterogeneous settings in which their language socialisation takes place, which will be briefly treated in §4.3.

**4.3 MISMATCHES BETWEEN LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES AND FEMALE LINGUISTIC PRACTICES.** The micro-study has also revealed that in the two households, the majority of women living there did not grow up in Agnack (in fact, only one of the



adult women, Hortense Diandy, was born in a ward of this village). In addition, all of the now grown-up women born into the two families left their paternal household at the latest when they got married, and now live elsewhere. This is not an arbitrary fact of these two families but reflects exogamous marriage practices attested in the entire Casamance. While men may spend their entire lives in their fathers' villages, this is hardly ever the case for women, who are married out of their agnatic families and communities into new communities, often with different identities and linguistic repertoires. Apart from Hortense Diandy, all wives in the two households grew up elsewhere, as is typical in many parts of Casamance. Throughout their lives women bridge their communities of origin and the ones they marry into through visits, (temporary) retirement from the marital household – as in the case of Madeleine Coly – and temporary migration. The male-centred language ideology does not account for their existence at all. This becomes strikingly obvious when both male and female interviewees state that Baïnouk should speak the language of their ancestors, which they mean to be Baïnouk. But of course, Baïnouk was never the (only) language of by far the majority of their female ancestors.

It makes sense, then, to look at women as being erased from the language ideologies at work in the area and also partly from another ideological construct, that of ethnicity, which is likewise based on male ancestry only. That women have no ethnicity and that ethnic concepts are mainly invoked for them in order to control their mobility or to form marriage exchange circles has been said before (for instance by Vail 1989 for Southern Africa and by Foucher 2005 for Joola society); and it definitely holds for women in Casamance that ethnicity for them is more important *before* marriage than afterwards. For women of marriageable age, it is important that their patrilineally acquired identities have the required properties to turn them into eligible partners for men – either that they come from a particular clan, ward, village, area or, in cases of strict linguistic exogamy, that they have certain identity languages. Once married, these identity aspects cease to be salient identity concepts. When wives have moved into their husband's compounds, at least according to the ideologies, their identities are often subsumed under those of their husbands. In actual language practice, women are of course often systematically different from men. This mismatch between ideological ascriptions and actual language use of women is often described with a critical undertone of describing a lack of allegiance of women to 'their' languages. For instance, in the context of Senegal, it has been reported that women shift to Wolof more often than men and that they are really the propagators of Wolofisation in villages and cities where Wolof has not been spoken so much in the past (Dreyfus & Juillard 2004, Juillard 1995).<sup>19</sup> One of the explanations given for this behaviour is that women are less versed in or discouraged from speaking French; another that they are upwardly mobile and prefer Wolof as a code associated with modernity and urban life style over their identity languages. It is often claimed by young Senegalese people that Wolof has become the language of romance because it is the language that young men need to use in order to flirt with girls. I would like to challenge the assump-

<sup>19</sup> Juillard (1995) notes that in Ziguinchor, 'Joola' girls consistently prefer speaking Wolof to 'Joola' young men. However, the identity label 'Joola' hides as much diversity as the label 'Baïnouk', so it is by no means clear if two people speaking 'Joola' actually share a language, as there are closely but also very distantly related languages subsumed in the label.

tion that women are less loyal to their identity languages for those contexts where it is an *a priori* assumption not backed up by detailed sociolinguistic research, and call for more empirical investigation of this subject in many situations. From the observations in Agnack Grand, it appears that the only woman who uses Wolof routinely to communicate in the family (not with outsiders where it is not a matter of choice but a communicative necessity) is Theodora Sagna. She is unable to speak Bayot, her identity language, with anybody but an adopted child in the village; the fact that she chooses Wolof over Gujaher in most communicative contexts does not express a lack of loyalty to her patrilineal identity or a shift away from an identity language. While in Agnack, most women are fluent in and use Gujaher often, this is due to the linguistic environment in which they grew up – nominally Gujaher and Gugëcer communities in Guinea Bissau for the most-part. Had they come from locations with different linguistic configurations, their linguistic behaviour would reflect this background. Alexander Cobbinah (p.c. 2014) confirms that women do not systematically speak more Wolof than men in Djibonker, his research area.

**4.4 NO LINKS BETWEEN LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES AND THE LANGUAGE SOCIALISATION OF CHILDREN.** While women's life experiences and pre-marriage identities are not reflected in the language ideologies, children's are only when they are male and grow up in their paternal community. This is not the case for a very high percentage of children, as becomes obvious when one looks at where children from the two households in Agnack Grand grow up. If one starts with the generation before the current heads of household, out of fifteen children living till adulthood, five were fostered out as children and one was fostered in. In the following generation, three children have been fostered out, and fifteen have been fostered in at the time of writing. One child lives with his mother in a nearby village. In all cases of fostering, the movement went hand in hand with a change in the linguistic environment. For the children with Gujaher given as their identity language but who grow up elsewhere, this always means that Gujaher is not, or is only marginally present in their new surroundings, and that the link between constructed identity and actual linguistic practice becomes weakened or broken, depending on the particular circumstances of their upbringing and the length of time they spend away from a Gujaher environment. For outsiders, this broken link can look as if the Nñajaher in question have given up their language. This is a comment I often heard, for instance, when most of Dominic Mané's children came back to the village to attend his funeral, including those who had grown up in Dakar and spoke very little or no Gujaher at all. In fact, Pascal and Yvonne have not forgotten or given up Gujaher; they never acquired it in the first place. In contrast, those of Dominic's and Hortense's children who spent at least parts of their childhood in Agnack Grand, Rose and Marianne, speak Gujaher and use it with ease, although they now live in Dakar.

Turning to the children who grow up in Agnack Grand, the numbers given above illustrate an important point: only a fraction of the children growing up together share the same identities, and their repertoires are subject to constant adaptation and negotiation. This situation often leads to cases where the constructed identity and the associated linguistic repertoires do not match. Babacar Baldé is a Pular speaker who does not speak Pular but Gujaher; Hortense Diedhou is a Joola who speaks Gujaher, and so on. Since children grow up with great independence from the age of three, when they are released into the company

of their age grades, the mixed and constantly shifting constituency of these groupings of children also entails that they are necessarily a space of multilingual language acquisition. Language socialisation takes place in peer groups, and children develop their repertoires in these groups. By the age of five, most children minimally use the languages spoken in the household plus Wolof. It is often invoked as a threat to Casamance languages that children speak Wolof among themselves, as this is interpreted as a case of language shift. I would like to argue that these interpretations are premature unless they are based on detailed sociolinguistic studies and aim at disentangling ideologies (of researchers and research participants alike) from practices. These assessments do not pay enough attention to the constituency of children's peer groups. Already the snapshot of two households has shown how diverse children's linguistic profiles are. Of course, their interactional space does not end at the level of the household; they regularly play and interact with children from the other households and wards of Agnack Grand, where children do not count Gujaher as a code in their repertoires, so there is a communicative necessity to learn and use other languages. Children are regularly sent on errands to Agnack Petit and even further to transmit messages, buy groceries from the local *boutique*, etc., activities that entail mastering a complex and adaptive repertoire from a young age.

If children's repertoires are already impressive before they start primary school, they are further augmented and altered in school. As mentioned before, the official language of Senegal, and the language of formal education, is French. When children start school at the age of five or six, they only speak isolated words and formulaic sentences in French. The teachers, in turn, already charged with the daunting task of teaching literacy and numeracy through the medium of French (which is not a subject in the curriculum), are generally not from the geographical area and do not speak the smaller, more locally confined languages. In Agnack Grand, they resort to the national *linguae francae* and use Wolof and, to a lesser extent Mandinka, as a metalanguage in the classroom. Children's knowledge of Wolof explodes from when they start school, and children of Agnack Grand, who in contrast to their peers from Agnack Petit are not much exposed to Mandinka in their daily lives, add it to their repertoires when it is used by Mandinka-speaking teachers and fellow students from Agnack Petit.

**4.5 INVISIBILITY AND VISIBILITY AS CONTEXTUAL TOOLS.** It appears that language ideologies are not only centred on patrilineality, but that they also focalise particular aspects of identity. How do people in Agnack and other Baïnouk-speaking areas reconcile ideologies foregrounding one part of their repertoire and identity with the manifold and changing practices they live? So far, I have not become aware of research participants perceiving the difference as a clash, and I argue in §4.5 below that the seeming misalignment between focalised language ideologies and multilingual practices is the result of a misunderstanding regarding the character of languages ideologies as essentialist vs. indexical and regarding their scope as including practices or remaining symbolic. Research participants are generally pleased to be multilingual; in fact, it is also seen as an essential part of being Baïnouk that one takes great pride in speaking everybody's languages (see also Lüpke 2010). That only parts of this identity and repertoire are activated in the male-centred language ideology does not negate the other parts; it just gives them a different status. At the same time, those parts of linguistic practice that are not profiled in the patrilineally

motivated facet of language ideology can under most circumstances – of communication with outsiders of various allegiances – be the only visible portions of a complex repertoire and be construed as an alternative identity by and for outsiders. This dynamic interplay will be described in the following section.

Many Casamançais – let alone Senegalese that do not know the area, or foreigners – have no knowledge of the continuing existence and location of Baïnouk groups. They know nothing of Baïnouk subdivisions and are only aware of the mythical claims surrounding them – that they are the autochthones of Casamance, that they are cursed, etc. Two tangible examples may serve to illustrate this invisibility. During a field trip in April 2014, I witnessed the visit of a Joola-led NGO, Usoforal, in Agnack Grand. This NGO, which aims to contribute towards ending the dormant civil war in Casamance, has been visiting Agnack Grand for the past decade or so, and its staff members know many of the inhabitants of the village well.<sup>20</sup> Yet they had no idea that this was a ‘Baïnouk’ village, and that many of its inhabitants speak the language Gujaher. (Ironically, they also assumed that Agnack as a whole was organised along ethnic divisions between Joola and Mandinka and attempted to overcome this division through their work). Given the multiple language skills of Agnackais in combination with their clan and first names, they assumed them to be either Mandinka (if they have Muslim first names, rather than particularly ‘Joola’ family names) and addressed them in Mandinka, or Joola (if they have Christian or Muslim first names, family names also attested among Joola, such as Sagna), and addressed them in a Joola language. This emerged when I chatted with NGO members after their action day in the village. It was not yet possible for me to interview research participants in Agnack on their motivations to tacitly – perhaps even explicitly – express these identities or eliminate the Gujaher aspect from them in interacting with this particular group of outsiders. It would definitely require an active effort to convey Baïnoukhood to outsiders, since for obvious reasons, it is not possible to do so linguistically through speaking a Baïnouk language with them, and there are no cultural traits that immediately signal it. The behaviour of the NGO members is not an isolated case; the school teachers in the village also had no idea of the Gujaher facet of the linguistic landscape of Agnack until this was revealed to them during an exhibition on Gujaher plant and environment knowledge organised as part of the DoBeS project in 2013 in the Agnack Grand primary school. (School teachers in Senegal almost never come from the localities where they are posted to teach.) When the continuing existence of Baïnouk-speaking communities is pointed out to these outsiders, the most common reaction is “Oui, mais ils sont en voie de disparition, n’est-ce pas?” [Yes, but they are vanishing, aren’t they?]. This rhetorical question serves more to explain why the person asking it is not aware of these communities than to raise the real issue of language endangerment. Language endangerment is treated in detail in §4.5 below.

A concrete example of (in)visibility of parts of identities and repertoires can be given through the example of Jules Mané. An Ujaher village chief who has the authority to settle strangers, he can turn into Joola Fogny in the space of five minutes by picking up his mobile phone and making an intervention in a Joola Fogny radio broadcast.

<sup>20</sup> To give an example, the director, who took part in the visit, had been a teacher of Alpha Naby Mané, an Ujaher from Agnack Petit at high school, yet she had no knowledge of his Baïnouk identity and language skills.

When speaking to a Mandinka or a French person, he may become a Joola, whereas speaking to a researcher interested in Baïnounk languages such as me makes him present himself as such. Many Manés in Agnack Petit, such as Alpha Naby Mané, could be taken for Mandinka, since their first names reveal them to be Muslims. For Jules, this identity is excluded because of his Christian first name: he cannot pass as a Mandinka in any context involving more than a fleeting encounter. He cannot credibly turn into a Wolof either, because the region-specific Wolof he speaks reveals him as a Casamançais. When in Dakar, he is likely to identify himself as a Joola-Baïnounk, unless he becomes involved in BOREPAB activism, which would turn him into a Baïnounk for that purpose.

To summarise, contexts in which Ñanjaher do not remain invisible are those where this identity aspect has social and political relevance. In regional contexts, being a Baïnounk (of whichever denomination) entails being autochthonous and thus at least symbolically having control over the land and landlord authority over strangers. In other cases, being an Ujaher signifies that one taps into a longstanding alliance with the Ñangëcer, which goes hand in hand with the possibility of exchanging daughters in marriage. At a national scale, signalling Baïnounkhood (without any nuances at this level) means that one lays claims to the symbolic rights conveyed through being a recognised community with a codified language, with the main consequence being that one becomes a minor player on the postcolonial, polyglossic playing field of Senegalese named languages.

Thus, the motivation for upholding all these different contextualised identities is social. Indexical identities single out parts of a complex identity with partly aligned repertoires by focalising the one that yields particular benefits in a specific setting. Each aspect can come across as total, which is the root of a widespread ideological misunderstanding suffered by proponents of essential language ideologies when they encounter these focalised identities. Languages – as part of ethnolinguistic ideologies and as part of actual repertoires – are only some of the tools in a larger semiotic toolbox in which religion and cultural practices have their place alongside dress codes and literacy practices, to name but a few. But crucially, they have to be read as practices that serve a cultural goal not of being all things to all people but of being the right thing to the right person in the right context. In all likelihood, the motivation for this strategy is rooted in the topography of the area together with the sociohistorical context holding until recently: only small groups were able to inhabit the marsh land where they formed small autonomous communities. Due to their small size and vulnerability to the slave trade, in which they were both victims and agents, these groups engaged in intensive exchange and created multiple alliances as needed. Difference was necessary in order to construct similarity and proximity, but also distance in dialectic fashion, so that one could sell members of other groups into slavery (constructing them as different in one identity aspect) but also form flexible alliances with these same groups (by drawing on another identity aspect) when needed. One single totalising identity was undesirable in this context: only multiple but contextualised identities allowed for survival. It is an empirical question how the repertoires and ideologies will adapt to the new context of postcolonial Senegal, and preliminary answers to this question will be presented in Lüpke (forthcoming c) and Cobbinah (in prep.).

**4.6 IDEOLOGICAL MISUNDERSTANDINGS.** I have argued throughout this paper that although the indexical language ideologies, which are widespread in Casamance, fore-



ground one language of mostly complex settings in an essentialist fashion, they do not necessarily entail that a village or location can be interpreted as the seat of a homogeneous and monolingual ‘speech community’. Yet it is a widespread expectation among outsiders to find such a community, and a common interpretation to analyse any instance of bi- or multilingualism as a threat to the ‘speech community’ one is interested in because it will induce shift to other languages. In our own research practice we experienced how difficult it is for us as researchers to free ourselves from the assumptions stemming from our own Western language ideologies. This is made even more difficult by encountering language ideologies that superficially match them. When representatives from the area present themselves as Baïnouk or Ñanjaher, this is a contextual and changeable identity that in addition is mainly based on the identity concepts of one gender. The image of a homogeneous community is also painted by lobby organisations like the BOREPAB. For proponents of essentialist language ideologies that are matched by standard language policies and practices, like most Westerners, the misunderstanding begins here. The local indexical ideologies are taken to be essentialist and applicable to all. The national essentialist language ideologies are not taken as symbolic expressions of political goals but as ideologies that should be translated into language practice. Consequently any practice that deviates from the ideologies is taken as an indicator of language shift. This means that speaking languages other than the identity language proclaimed by individuals in a particular context is taken to entail the endangerment of the language in question; and that women’s language behaviour is interpreted as contributing to it. This misunderstanding has resulted in a systematic misinterpretation of multilingual language use in areas like Casamance. It has also led to many of the languages in the area being classified as endangered although they appear quite vital once the ideological misunderstanding is cleared up. (Note that many of the languages actually *are* endangered; but crucially they are not those listed in common catalogues like the Ethnologue and not because of the criteria commonly assessed on vitality scales.)

Let us consider the often-heard claim that Baïnouk languages are endangered and what narrative it follows. The historical accounts cite Portuguese sources portraying the Banyun as powerful traders and state their decline from the 17th century onwards, often interpreting the present-day pockets of Baïnouk settlements as the few remaining traces of a once powerful group that is often assumed to constitute the autochthonous population of Casamance. However, as the historians stress and has been laid out in §1, we actually do not know to what the label Banyun referred, whether it comprises or comprised any of the groups who are starting to see themselves as Baïnouk today, and whether it was related to linguistic affiliation at all. In addition, the Casamance and Senegambia were only sparsely settled in precolonial times (Hawthorne 2003, Wright 1999), so imagining large contiguously inhabited areas giving rise to homogeneous groups does not correspond to the historical reality of local clan-based settlements. The pessimistic outlook on the Baïnouk as a group in decline has certainly framed the perspective of later researchers more closely in contact with the groups they described: Cobbinah (2013) reports predictions on the impending disappearance of Gubëher that have been made from the early 20th century onwards by French linguists and colonial administrators. That they have not been corroborated so far does not keep modern stakeholders from making similar claims. The French jurist de Lespinay (1987, 1996), whose research motivated our DoBeS project, paints a grim picture regarding the future of Baïnouk languages, claiming that they are largely giving



up their languages due to extensive exploitation and their collective ‘*structure mentale*’ or negative attitude to the languages, which he links back to Sira Bana’s curse. His assessment is shared by the Ethnologue, which only lists Baïnouk Gunyaamolo and Baïnouk Samik, Samik being a village in which Baïnouk Gujaher is spoken, and locates them at level 6b of the EGIDS (Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale) used by the Ethnologue (Lewis, Simons & Fennig 2014), indicating threatened status. Other Baïnouk varieties are not listed. Since the existing pilot sociolinguistic research on Gunyaamolo (Lüpke 2010) and other varieties (Cobbinah 2013, Lüpke & Storch 2013) has not been picked up and there is no research on the Gujaher variety of Samik available, these assessments clearly pertain to the level of language ideology. The Ethnologue also lists Kassanga, called Gugëcer in this paper, as a language at level 8b of the scale, corresponding to nearly extinct, although it is spoken by a number of vibrant village communities in Guinea Bissau and by a high number of married-out women in the area. The Ethnologue criteria, which give much weight to the existence of literacy in a standardised language, intergenerational language transmission and use of the language in all domains of life, are not really applicable to the many multilingual configurations of Africa, as argued in more detail in Lüpke & Storch (2013: 267–339) and Lüpke (forthcoming b). The BOREPAB paints a similarly pessimistic picture by describing the Baïnouk language as on the way to becoming extinct, whilst simultaneously expressing, in the statutes of 1982, an optimism that declares that the effect of Sira Bana’s curse is waning. This newly won confidence, in line with the growing symbolic status of small languages in the wake of Senegal’s recognition of national languages, has put ‘Baïnouk’ back on the map, but crucially, as an endangered language.

After working for more than seven years with a team of Senegalese and European researchers in three Baïnouk communities, our impressions – and crucially, the opinions and practices of speakers in the rural communities where we work – do not match the pessimistic forecasts and assessments. This mismatch is important and warrants closer investigation, because it is not the case that all Baïnouk languages are spoken in vibrant language ecologies. Yet the endangered or moribund varieties that one might want to include here are not even addressed by most of these sources, nor even viewed as part of Baïnouk by the BOREPAB and any Baïnouk we encountered (the endangered northern varieties listed in Lespinay (1987) notwithstanding). When comparing the impressions gained through the two projects I have led in the area with a map drawn by Sauvageot based on research conducted in 1973 (Sauvageot 1973), not much has changed, with one crucial exception: the village of Djibelor, home of the Baïnouk variety Gubelor is not included in the Baïnouk universe of the BOREPAB and is not listed in the Ethnologue. This village is being swallowed up by the expanding regional capital of Ziguinchor, and in the wake of urbanisation, the linguistic ecology is just as disturbed as the natural one, resulting in the former inhabitants of the village losing their livelihoods and therefore moving on, with more and more city dwellers transforming this location from a rice-farming village into a suburb with a new set of inhabitants. Drastic changes in the natural and linguistic ecology threatening linguistic ecologies, as also stressed by Carlo & Good (2014), Lüpke & Storch (2013), and Vigouroux & Mufwene (2008), are much more likely to have a negative impact on language vitality than multilingual settings *per se*, which are actually the only settings in which languages spoken by numerically small populations can thrive, given that they have to interact with wider society.

In the other Baïnounk language areas where we have conducted research, the languages are as alive as the proverbial condemned (although crucially this does not mean that they fulfil the EGIDS or other common criteria for ‘safe’ languages). One factor that prevents the public from taking note of their existence is their insider status, which is linked to multilingualism and fluid indexical identities that run counter to the idea of a homogeneous speech community. This status ironically means that as soon as lobby organisations attempt to cater for more essentialist language ideologies as instantiated by the codification movement in Senegal, they need to evoke the existence of such a homogeneous community. Since such a community in reality does not exist, it can only ever be presented as the endangered and compromised remains of a pristine and pure community of the past that needs to be restored and saved. At the same time, there are no real attempts at altering the present situation, apart from rhetorical ones. This seeming contradiction makes perfect sense, though: in the light of the different scopes of the language ideologies operating on the ground and at the national level, the adherence to an essentialist language ideology and all it entails – standardisation, codification, use of one language in as many domains as possible – must remain symbolic, as argued in more detail in Lüpke (forthcoming d). Rather than being a problem, this dialectic behaviour instantiates a two-pronged strategy to maintain small-scale multilingualism while at the same time catering to monolingually biased models of multilingualism operating at the national level to a minimal extent. Once one recognises that these ideologies are not incompatible but are directed at different stakeholders for different purposes, seeming contradictions can be understood as instances of this two-sided process. That the BOREPAB declares in its statutes that the Baïnounk were a homogeneous group while on the same page celebrating multilingualism (BOREPAB 1982) is one example of this process. That the BOREPAB and other members of Baïnounk communities (such as the dictionary committees for the languages of the Crossroads project) engage in hot debates over orthography issues and standardisations although none of their members actually writes these languages, and not for lack of literacy skills, is another example.

## **5. DEVELOPING AN INTEGRATED MODEL FOR LANGUAGE DOCUMENTATION OF MULTILINGUAL CONTEXTS**

**5.1 MOVING AWAY FROM THE IDEA OF PARADISE LOST.** For us as researchers working in the multilingual ecologies of Lower Casamance, a complex process of revealing language ideologies and adjusting our research practice was required in order to lay bare patterns of language use. A first important step was to recognise the symbolic nature of essentialist language ideologies and to look beyond them. A second important step consisted in recognising the indexical local language ideologies and their mismatch with language practices. A final step, that took us a number of years of immersion into the complex social life of languages and their speakers in this area, and only happened in 2014, was to put these three puzzle pieces together and understand their dialectic nature. This step importantly comprised understanding the differences between the nature and scope of the essentialist language ideologies at work both in Senegal and in the Western world. Local ideologies are designed to create manifold social and political alliances by creating contextual similarity and closeness through language. National ideologies serve to assert the symbolic existence of imaginary communities in a national ‘linguistic market place’

(Bourdieu 1991), but are not flanked by actual standard language policies or practices. This is very different from Western contexts, where ideologies are enforced by a number of language institutions and prescriptive language practices. An understanding of this crucial difference to Western language ideologies made it possible to see the coexistence of indexical and essentialist ideologies as a dialectic strategy rather than as a contradiction.

In the initial phases of language documentation, we took the essentialist ideologies operating at the national level at face value – they were visible to us and seemingly resembled our own language ideologies. As a consequence, what speakers of Baïnounk languages initially emulated for us as speech events to be documented in the DoBeS project were instances of what Woodbury (2003, 2011) terms the ‘ancestral code mode’ of language documentation: a pristine language, not manifesting traces of past multilingualism through language contact phenomena and not contaminated by multilingual language use that is only ever conceived as harmful. This language mode is highly controlled and somewhat artificial, but can be seen as an instance of the extreme end of a scale from monolingual to multilingual language modes (see Grosjean 2008, Green 2011 and Green & Abutalebi 2013 for different language modes in speakers and communities).

Maintaining monolingual speech of this kind for the duration of a recording required massive interventions before, during and after it: before a recording started, the participants of the speech event had to be carefully selected and many villagers kept at bay to enable a monolingual focus. One of my consultants took on the self-created role of gatekeeper, despite my insistence on wanting to film natural speech. Of course, I was at the origin of this misunderstanding, since my interest in documenting and recording ‘Baïnounk’ was incompatible with the multilingual reality. During a recording, this careful management of speech event participants had to continue: virtually all communication takes place outdoors, and people walk in and out of each other’s conversations, constantly peppering them with greetings and phatic communication, in whichever language is appropriate. These undesired multilingual speech acts – from the essentialist perspective that we had unwittingly conveyed – had to be prevented by the gatekeeper constantly shushing people away and keeping them at bay. The necessary clean-up did not stop there: when it came to transcribing and explaining words, the gatekeeper insisted on replacing all words of recognisable foreign origin. These recordings constitute records of a possible, even if sometimes a little forced, snapshot of linguistic practices at the extreme monolingual end of the spectrum, and offer insights into the interplay of language ideologies at work. They are valuable for insight into language as an abstract system, both for linguistic description and understanding reifications of language made by speakers themselves. However, the snapshot of linguistic behaviour we were obtaining through this procedure represented only a skewed sample of the full range of communicative acts in Agnack. Given that I was staying with a family and able to observe many less controlled speech events, I became interested in uncovering and documenting these other facets of language use as well, and therefore needed to develop different methods for data collection resulting in less censored data. I found other consultants less inclined to edit speech in this way, and my participation in the daily life of the villagers combined with the perspectives offered by them resulted in me starting to experiment with forms of data collection that would minimise the influence of my presence and of their second-guessing my intentions about language use.

**5.1 AVOIDING ‘GROUPISM’: GEOGRAPHIC SAMPLING AND RECORDING TECHNIQUES.**

The first step towards this goal was to let go of the idea of working with ‘Baïnounk’. The discussion in sections 3 and 4 has illustrated that this identity is not co-extensive with speaking a Baïnounk language, as the label regroups many Baïnounk who do not or only minimally speak one variety and excludes many people who do speak Baïnounk but are not seen as Baïnounk. Therefore, I decided to define the population from which I would sample language use in geographic terms (see Seifart 2008 for a discussion of sampling techniques in language documentation), in order to avoid the effects of groupism on my selection of research participants and their self-selection on ideological grounds. Since I wanted to record daily interaction and rich ethnographic information on the participants of the recordings, I chose a small geographical area – that of Agnack Grand. I visited each of the seven households in the village at least twice (and have visited most of them many more times for socialising). During the first visit, I explained that I was interested in recording daily life in the household (not mentioning at all that I was interested in recording language use) and would seek the oral consent of the family members to come back and record at a mutually agreed time. With the help of an intermediary who would conduct the interview in the appropriate language(s) I then collected information on the members of the household, including family members not living in Agnack Grand. On the arranged day, I returned, chatted a little while with members of the family and then set up my camcorder, usually in the courtyard where most of the activities in the household take place during the dry season. I fixed the camcorder on one scene (for instance women preparing food, braiding children’s hair or pounding rice, men chatting while drinking Ataya, mending a bicycle, weaving baskets or fabricating wooden stools, or the entire family sharing a meal and gathering around a fire in the evening) and I did not move it during the entire recording. I recorded as long as possible, not stopping the recording when nobody was speaking or everybody had left the scene for a little while. I often went away from the camcorder to write down observations so as to minimise the impact of my presence.

The results of this procedure are recordings where stretches of linguistic interaction are interspersed with silent activities, and where minimally two, but much more frequently three or four languages are present. It is time-consuming to transcribe and annotate these recordings, but they have a great potential to complement the recordings that feature ‘monolingual language mode’ (Grosjean 2008) to offer a fuller picture of varied and heterogeneous multilingual practice.

**5.2 INTERPRETING LANGUAGE USE: USING RICH ETHNOGRAPHIC INFORMATION.**

As I hope to have shown through the detailed presentation of two households of Agnack, it is impossible to interpret linguistic behaviour and language choices and constraints in multilingual settings without taking individual trajectories and life stories into account, as they result in complex and changeable repertoires very different from the essentialist language ideologies. My interpretation of self-proclaimed Baïnounk who do not speak this language, for instance, would have been very different had I not known where they had grown up. Likewise, my assessment of children’s language use would have been one of Wolofisation in many instances had I not known all the children participating in a speech event and their repertoires and the history behind them personally. Women’s repertoires would not have been part of the picture at all, because the dominant ideologies erase them,

resulting in misrepresentations of communities as much more homogeneous than they ever were and can be. Crucially, it was not sufficient to document language use – what was offered as speech depended on ideologies working at different levels and drawing in research participants and researchers alike.

It would have been impossible to collect all this information and link it to language use in a common three-year long individual research project; clearly, such an endeavour entails longer research periods and much more team work than generally possible in basic descriptive and documentary research. However, an understanding of the nature and impact of multilingualism is only possible by investigating the scale and intensity of multilingual activity in the daily and hourly practice of individuals, which requires a study at the micro-level, before generalisations can be drawn, situations compared and a preliminary assessment of directionality of larger trends in changing and adapting repertoires can be undertaken.

Ideologies serve to express those aspects of identity that are perceived to be most relevant for positioning oneself as an individual or as a member of a group in different socio-political contexts, and are therefore as changeable as these contexts. Therefore, I would like to argue that descriptive and documentary efforts that link language ideologies to these multilingual situations and their sociolinguistic settings have great potential for an understanding of the dynamics at work in many African situations, as argued below.

## 6. CONCLUSION: PUTTING AFRICAN MULTILINGUALISM ON THE AGENDA.

Multilingualism of the kind described for Agnack Grand is not just an idiosyncratic trait particular to this village, nor is it a case of ‘superdiversity’ (Blommaert & Rampton 2011) induced by massive migration and the resulting complexity. The coexistence of several languages in daily interaction characterises many African societies, both rural and urban, whether in the context of massive migration or not. Typical African societal multilingual patterns may involve official languages (mostly of colonial provenance), national languages serving as languages of wider communication or as official languages, and languages of essentially local distribution. Especially the latter configurations involving small scale multilingualism are much more representative of linguistic diversity on the continent than scenarios involving an official and a national language.

African multilinguals do not stack several fully-fledged monolingual repertoires onto each other. Typically, they acquire one or several languages at the same time – local and regional languages, national and international *linguae francae* in the West African context. Later, they add the official language (exclusively through schooling) and a number of African languages, depending on their individual trajectories and networks, and on the communication and exchange networks of their society in communities of practice.

Although multilingual situations, such as those evoked above, are globally more widespread and rather the norm in Africa than the official linguistic constellations found in ‘so-called’ monolingual nation states, they are not well studied at all. This is particularly true for contexts involving not only an ex-colonial/official (Indo-European) language and a national language in contact (moreover very often studied in contexts of migration), but a number of non-Western indigenous languages. There are good reasons for this lack of coverage: in many areas of the world, only major languages featuring in these contexts have received any linguistic attention; most languages are not sufficiently described or documented to allow the study of the linguistic practices of multilingual speech communities.



This skewed research situation means that the scientific understanding of the cognitive, linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects of the most widespread forms of multilingualism remain dramatically under-researched (including the question of under which conditions minority languages in these complex environments are maintained or abandoned; see Romaine 2002). Another negative consequence is that language vitality assessment and language management and pedagogical efforts either have only recourse to methods developed for (imaginary) monolingual communities, where one language serves in all communicative contexts, or that they are based on assumptions about the role of colonial languages and of hierarchical relations between the multiple languages of an idealised ‘speech community’ that may not be appropriate for specific sociolinguistic settings. In many cases, multilingualism is only ever perceived as a problem, not as a resource (see Pagel 2012 for a recent example). This negative attitude is extremely widespread where African multilingualism is concerned, as also criticised by Fardon & Furniss (1994), Djité (2008, 2009), and Mazrui & Mazrui (1998), among others. It hinders fundamental research on multilingual practices just as much as the development and implementation of language management models that adequately reflect them. Therefore, central and radically new insights on an unexplored but widespread type of multilingualism are expected to emerge from research on these settings.

We know from language acquisition research that speaking different languages and varieties has an impact on *all* of the languages, varieties or registers spoken (Chang 2012; Gullberg 2013). It is necessary to let go of the illusion of being able to distil the pure speaker unaffected by multilingualism, out of ‘incoherent’ societies. Studies of language contact reveal the fossilised traces of multilingual speech and there is a growing awareness of their importance for language structure and language change (Heine & Nurse 2008). At the same time, knowledge of the sociolinguistic profiles of the multilingual settings that produce particular convergence patterns remains very limited (Trudgill 2011). There is evidence that different types of multilingual societies and contexts result in radically different cognitive demands on producing and processing multilingual speech (Green 2011, Green & Abutalebi 2013).

Research on multilingualism therefore has the potential to be of significant impact not only for research in the areas of contact linguistics, sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics, but also for language management and pedagogy both in West Africa and in the West. Language management efforts in the formal sector in West Africa are not very successful (Brock-Utne & Skattum 2009; Skattum 2010), because they select languages that are not taken up in education due to conflicting language ideologies, attitudes and practices and because they use teaching models that are not appropriate in the contexts in question. A better understanding of the ecology of languages (Mufwene 2001) in a West African multilingual space creates the prerequisites for language management better adapted to actual practice. The successful management of linguistic diversity entirely outside the formal sector in a region of the world almost exclusively known for its deficiencies has the potential to inform language management and pedagogy elsewhere by providing inspiring models, thus reversing global tendencies in knowledge transfer. This, in turn, is of relevance for a wide range of global stakeholders ranging from minority community members, language endangerment researchers, policy makers and the general public.

Current (socio)linguistic research on Western settings (e.g. Blackledge & Creese 2010) and worldwide (e.g. Migge & Léglise 2013) is moving away from seeing multilingualism



as a deviation from the fictional monolingual norm. This research is recognising multilingualism as a great social and cognitive resource, rather than as a problem. It is time for descriptive and documentary research in one of the most multilingual settings worldwide, in Africa and beyond, to follow suit and see multilingual language use not as a distracting interference with a pure language ideal but as the reality of speakers as social actors that we should aim to describe.

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Friederike Lüpke  
fl2@soas.ac.uk

## Why are they named after death? Name giving, name changing and death prevention names in Gújjolaay Eegimaa (Banjal)

Serge Sagna (*Surrey Morphology Group, University of Surrey*)  
 and Emmanuel Bassène (*Faculté de Médecine Pharmacie  
 et Odontologie Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, Sénégal*)

This paper advocates the integration of ethnographic information such as anthroponymy in language documentation, by discussing the results of the documentation of personal names among speakers of Gújjolaay Eegimaa. Our study shows that Eegimaa proper names include names that may be termed ‘meaningless names’, because their meanings are virtually impossible to identify, and meaningful names, i.e. names whose meanings are semantically transparent. Two main types of meaningful proper names are identified: those that describe aspects of an individual’s physic or character, and ritual names which are termed *death prevention names*. Death prevention names include names given to women who undergo the *Gaññalen* ‘birth ritual’ to help them with pregnancy and birth-giving, and those given to children to fight infant mortality. We provide an analysis of the morphological structures and the meanings of proper names and investigate name changing practices among Eegimaa speakers. Our study shows that, in addition to revealing aspects of individuals’ lives, proper names also reveal important aspects of speakers’ social organisation. As a result, anthroponymy is an area of possible collaborative research with other disciplines including anthropology and philosophy.

**1. INTRODUCTION.** Anthroponymy is a research area which has attracted much interest from various disciplines including Anthropology, Philosophy, Linguistics and Cognitive Psychology. Anthropological research on naming practices includes the investigation of name giving times and the continuity of the use of names given from childhood. It also includes the plurality of names, that is, bearing several names at the same time (Bodenhorn & vom Bruck, 2006; Journet, 1990, 2001; Journet-Diallo, 2008; Valentine, Brennen, & Bredart, 1996; vom Bruck & Bodenhorn, 2006). The meaning of proper names has also taken centre stage in Philosophy and Linguistics. Valentine et al. (1996: 12) argue that there are two competing views on the semantics of proper names: *the descriptive theory of reference*, according to which names describe characteristics of an individual, and *the theory of direct reference*, which states that proper names have no internal semantics, and that their meaning is confined to external reference only. Cognitive psychology investigates, among other things, the mental processes involved in the recognition and recall of proper names. The interest in proper names from various



disciplines points to the importance of including anthroponymic information in language documentation, in that it provides a fertile field for interdisciplinary research.

This paper investigates aspects of name giving practices among speakers of Gújjolaay Eegimaa (Eegimaa hereafter) from an anthropological linguistic perspective. It provides an analysis of aspects of the structures and meanings of proper names in Eegimaa, but also the cultural background necessary to understand those meanings. Our primary focus is on proper names, which we define following Valentine et al. (1996) as names that designate unique individuals. Other kinds of proper names like surnames, geographical names or animal names are not investigated here. The naming practices examined here include some which are in strong decrease (e.g. birth-giving rituals and their naming practices), and others like name changing which have been abandoned mainly due to the influence of new religions and administrative complications involved in reregistering a new name (cf. §5). In the last century, new naming practices have been introduced along with new religious influences from Christianity and Islam as well as the formal school system, and exist alongside some of the older ones. These new naming practices are however not investigated here. Rather, our focus is on Eegimaa traditional naming practices, especially those of the *Gaññalen* ‘birth ritual’ which we will refer to as *death prevention names*, a term we borrow from Obeng (1998), to refer to names given to newborns to help prevent them from dying.

This paper begins with a presentation of the language and its speakers in §2. It is followed by a discussion of the source of our data in §3, where we also discuss the importance of including traditional naming practices in Language Documentation. In §4 we examine name giving practices among Eegimaa speakers, and provide an analysis of different categories of meaningful names given to children, as evidence that traditional Eegimaa names are not mere labels for name bearers. We discuss different name changing practices in the traditional society of Eegimaa speakers in §5, including name changing to avoid homonymy with deceased members of the community. §6 provides an analysis of the structure of the *Gaññalen* ‘birth ritual’ or death prevention names given in the Eegimaa language and other contact languages. We show that among Eegimaa people (and also other Jóola peoples and their non-Jóola neighbours) death prevention names are given to both newborn children whose death is being fought against, and also to their mothers, who change their names as part of the *Gaññalen* ‘birth ritual’ to help them fight unsuccessful maternity. We compare Eegimaa death prevention names for mothers, which we refer to as ‘child-bearing names’, to those given to children, and argue that by examining their meanings, it is possible to tell whether the name bearer is a child or a mother. We summarise the discussion in §7.

**2. GÚJJOLAAY EEGIMAA, ITS SPEAKERS AND THEIR NEIGHBOURS.** This section briefly presents the Gújjolaay Eegimaa (Eegimaa for short; Ethnologue code: ISO 639-3: bqj), its speakers and its varieties. We also discuss aspects of the contact situation of the Eegimaa language. This is important, because as we will show in §6 below, some of the Eegimaa death prevention names and child-bearing names are given to Eegimaa people from other communities.

Eegimaa is a Jóola language spoken in the Basse Casamance area of Southern Senegal by a population estimated to be between 7,000 (Bassène, 2007) and 11,200

speakers (Lewis, Simons, & Fennig, 2014). Jóola languages are classified as members of Sapir's (1971) BAK group of Atlantic languages of the Niger Congo language phylum. Speakers of these languages are found in the Gambia, in the former Casamance region of Southern Senegal and in Guinea Bissau. The map in Figure 1, taken from Ethnologue, presents the languages of Senegal. The arrow on the map points to the Eegimaa speaking area (Bandial is the name used by Ethnologue for Eegimaa).



FIGURE 1. Map of Senegal (courtesy of Google maps)

Eegimaa is mainly spoken in Mof-Ávvi, a former kingdom of 10 villages located to the west of Ziguinchor, the capital city of the former administrative region of Casamance in the south of Senegal. Mof-Ávvi is a peninsula bordered by the Casamance River to the north, which separates it from the Jóola Búluf and Jóola Fogny areas, and to the east by the villages Brin and Djibonker, where the speakers of Kujireray and Baïnounk Gubëeher live. In the south, the river known as Kamobeul Bolon separates Mof-Ávvi from the Bayot speaking area, while the west side of Mof-Ávvi coincides with the homeland of the Jóola Kaasa Húluf and Jóola Kaasa Ésuulaalu<sup>2</sup>. The map in Figure 2 below, adapted from Palmeri and Gazio (1995), shows a very approximate location of Mof-Ávvi in relation to other neighbouring speech communities. Some of these communities will be referred to in our discussion of death prevention names in §6. The Eegimaa spoken in Mof-Ávvi is known by several names given by speakers of neighbouring languages. For example, the

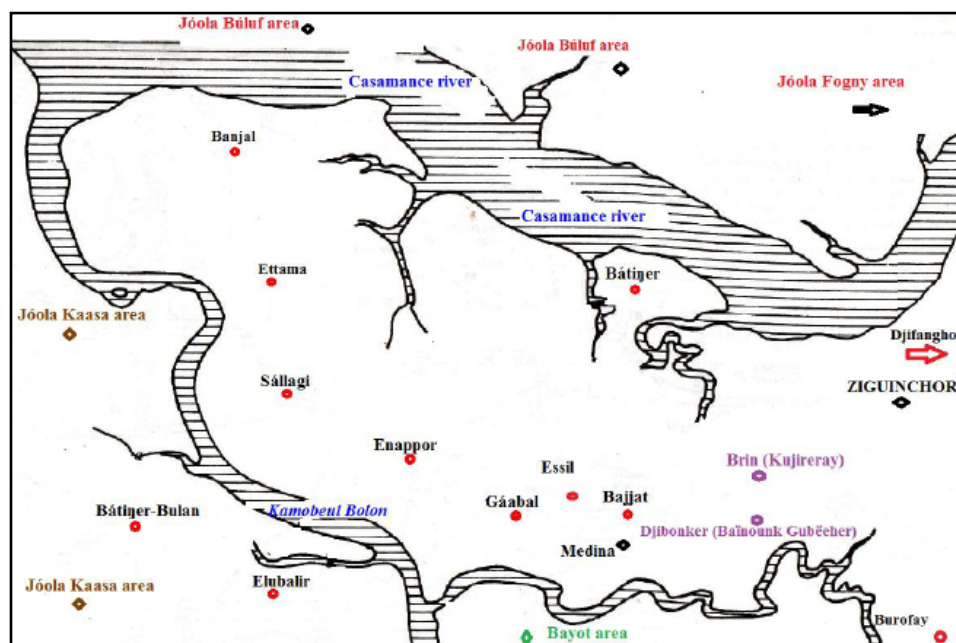


FIGURE 2. Map of the Eegimaa speaking area

name *Kusiilay*<sup>1</sup> ‘the language of Essil’, is the name given by speakers of Kujireray to the Eegimaa language, because Essil, of which Bajjat was a district, is the village which has a border with their village. *Endungo* is the name given by Bayot speakers, but its meaning is not known. *Kúlaakiay*, ‘the language of village of Seleki/Sállagi’, is the name given by Jóola Kaasa speakers who are more familiar with the village of Seleki/Sállagi’ than all other villages of Mof-Ávvi. Finally, *Banjál/Bandial* ‘the language of the village of Banjál’, the most popular of all those names, is the name given by the Jóola Búluf and Jóola Fogny speakers to Eegimaa people and their language, because people from the village of Banjál were the first to be in contact with them.

Jóola language varieties which are closely related to Eegimaa include *Kujireray/Kuluunaay* (from the village of Brin with 76% lexical similarity) and *Gufiñamay* (from the village of Afiniam with 74% lexical similarity (based on Lewis et al., 2014 eds.)). *Gútaamay* (from the village of Butam), *Gulapaoray* (from the village Djilapaor) and *Gusiilay* (ISO 639-3: bsl) from the village of Thionk Essil are also other languages related to Eegimaa. They are located north of the Casamance River in the Jóola Búluf area. There are also small migrant Eegimaa communities in villages like Djifanghor (east of Ziguinchor) and in Burofaye (south of Ziguinchor), where they cohabit with speakers of Baïnouk languages. Nowadays

<sup>1</sup> Village names are written using their usual spelling. The Ethnologue language codes are provided for language varieties that have them. Language names are written following the recommendation for the transcription of national languages of Senegal, Decree 2005–981. Names of the villages of Mof-Ávvi are written using the Eegimaa orthography and following the pronunciation of village names by native speakers.

most Eegimaa speakers from Mof-Ávvi live outside their homeland, generally in urban areas like Ziguinchor and Dakar. Speakers of Eegimaa use the term *Gújjolaay* (meaning Jóola) to refer to their language when they speak to each other, but Eegimaa to distinguish their Jóola variety from that of other Jóola peoples. Eegimaa is an endangered language whose transmission to new generations has been declining significantly in the last decades.

It is important to understand the contact situation of Eegimaa, because some of the ritual names analysed in this paper come from other languages or from neighbouring communities. These names are given either in Eegimaa or in a different language.

Eegimaa people are neighbours to a multilingual village called Medina, which is located within the territory of Mof-Ávvi between Gáabal (Kamobeul) and Djibonker (see map in Figure 2 above). However, none of the participants in our research has been to that village to undergo the ‘birth ritual’ described in §6 below, and none of them bears a name coming from that village. Medina is a relatively recently founded multilingual village (probably one to two hundred years old according to the inhabitants of Mof-Ávvi), which is populated by migrants from different linguistic communities. The languages spoken in that village include Jóola Búluf, Jóola Kaasa, Fula and Mandinka, and Wolof, which is becoming a more important *lingua franca*. The multilingual situation of Medina is uncharacteristic of the rest of the territory of Mof-Ávvi, which is a linguistically homogeneous Eegimaa speaking area, in the sense that there is only one linguistic speech community, with Eegimaa as the language of communication. Speakers of Eegimaa have become increasingly multilingual, especially in the last five to seven decades due to schooling in French and rural exodus. However, the linguistic landscape of the Eegimaa speaking areas of Mof-Ávvi is characterised by the use of Eegimaa throughout the ten villages.<sup>2</sup>

Note that some speakers of the Manjaku (Mandjak) language and Jóola people from the Jóola Búluf speaking areas have settled on the peripheries of the villages of Bajjat and Gáabal, which are on the border between Mof-Ávvi and Médina (cf. Figure 2 above). While migrants from the Jóola Búluf areas to Mof-Ávvi have totally shifted to Eegimaa, Manjaku speakers have kept Manjaku as a home language, but they use Eegimaa in their daily interactions outside their home.

There are reports that some Eegimaa women have left their homes to live with the Manjaku speakers after pregnancy or after giving birth to hide from supernatural malefic forces that threaten the life of their newborns. However, we do not have any death prevention or child-bearing names in the Manjaku language in our current database.

### 3. THE DOCUMENTATION OF EEGIMAA PROPER NAMES

**3.1 THE SOURCE OF THE DATA.** This paper originates from collaborative work between two native speakers of Eegimaa who have been collecting traditional names

<sup>2</sup> There are two main types of village in the Casamance. The first type is that of multilingual villages which are composed of different linguistic communities. These villages, like cities, are linguistically heterogeneous in the sense that different languages are used in different districts. The second type of village is that of villages like those in Mof-Ávvi where only one language is used in each village. Speakers may be multilingual as a result of schooling and migration, but this is a case of individual multilingualism rather than societal multilingualism. The villages can be seen as linguistically homogeneous because only one language is used among the speakers who live there.

separately for different purposes.<sup>3</sup> The two authors' combined methods of data collection include native speaker intuition, since they are both members of the Eegimaa community, and are as a result, familiar with individuals who bear traditional proper names, or they know traditional names of many ancestors. The methods also include elicitation sessions conducted with other native speakers, but also the collection of names from different types of songs e.g. funeral dirge songs, initiation songs, and libation rituals during which the names of ancestors associated to a shrine are called.

Bassène (the second author) has been collecting names in written form for several years in order to include them in the calendar he produces annually for Eegimaa speakers. The calendar is based on the six day week of the Eegimaa people and records, in addition to proper names, names of activities such as agricultural activities and also traditional rituals, celebrations and the times they take place during the year. Bassène's calendar is important because most traditional rituals take place on specific days of the traditional week which are different from the more commonly used modern French based calendar.

Sagna's data on traditional proper names was collected during his documentation of endangered linguistic and cultural aspects of Eegimaa and its speakers (Sagna, 2011). The documentation of Eegimaa has provided a record of speech from various communicative events. The primary data collected includes narratives, rituals, songs and conversations etc., all of which includes occurrences of proper names, which were added to the list of proper names compiled during elicitation sessions. Interviews about the *Gaññalen* 'birth ritual' were also conducted as part of the documentation of proper names in which speakers, especially women who are involved in those rituals, explained the reasons, procedures and significance of those rituals and also the associated ritual names. The analysis proposed here is based on a careful examination of at least 1000 proper names including meaningful and meaningless names and death prevention names.

**3.2 WHY DOCUMENT PROPER NAMES?** Names of European origin like *Elisabeth* and *Daniel*, which are often classified as Christian names, and those of Arab origin like *Ousmane* and *Ibrahima*, often referred to as Muslim names, are common names among Eegimaa speakers today. These names have no meanings, but are labels, which in most cases indicate the religious affiliation of the name giver or the name bearers. In contrast to these recently introduced names, traditional Eegimaa names generally have meanings, though there are names whose meanings cannot be traced synchronically or they simply don't seem to have meanings.

Eegimaa traditional names include those whose meanings point to aspects of the name

<sup>3</sup> The Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP) is gratefully acknowledged for funding Sagna's Documentation of Eegimaa between 2008 and 2011 (Grant IPF0141), and the ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) is gratefully acknowledged for supporting his current research (Grant ES/K0011922/1). We thank the dozens of Eegimaa people who contributed to this research, and speakers of other languages who contributed data for Wolof (Mar Diop and Catherine Bassène) and Manjack (Julienne Bith Gomis). We also thank the audience at the workshop on 'New data, methods, and approaches to African language documentation (SOAS Endangered Languages Week 2013) for their questions and comments. Finally, we would like to thank Penny Everson (from the Surrey Morphology Group) and Philip Hutton for taking time to proofread one of the versions of this paper.



bearer's physic or behaviour. For example, a name like *Amigaat* 'He/she has a skinny leg' describes the physique of a skinny person. Other names give insights into the circumstances of birth of the named individual, or for women, their struggles to give birth later in life. Examples of names of this kind include *Akkalenjayi* 's/he torment his/her mother' which reveals the suffering of a mother to keep her child alive, while *Farugaye* 'tired womb' is the name of a woman who has previously had many miscarriages. These are meaningful names which will be called death prevention names for children and child-bearing names for mothers (see §6 below for a detailed account). Death prevention names are names given as part of ritual practices designed to prevent infant mortality. Women who have recurrent miscarriages and those who repeatedly lose children at a very young age are given new names when they undergo the *Gaññalen* 'birth ritual'. The meanings of these names capture their unsuccessful experiences with motherhood. Names given to the children of these mothers are protective names which often tell the individuals' story as the child is helped to stay alive.

One of the main goals of documentary linguistics is to provide primary data of good quality, for long-term preservation "so that it can be used in new theoretical ventures as well as in (re-)evaluating and testing well-established theories" (Gippert, Himmelmann, & Mosel, 2006: v). Documenting names like death prevention names is therefore an enterprise that goes beyond a simple collection of a list of names. It involves an understanding of not only the meanings of the names, but also the belief system including the conceptualisation of the different supernatural forces that can affect the life of a newborn, and those that can help to protect it. As will be shown below, using information based on personal knowledge from the two authors and from the investigation carried out for the purpose of this research, infant mortality is believed to have several sources. On the one hand it can be the result of the incarnation of a spirit into a human body. In this case, competent seers can help to remove the spirit<sup>4</sup> to prevent it from killing the child. People who are involved in trying to remove the spirit and keep the child alive can rely on their medical ethnobotanical knowledge when they need to use the right medicine to expel the spirit. There are also situations where a child who is believed to have supernatural power can be identified by seers as one who uses their supernatural power to 'travel' between life and death by being born and then dying again and again. Here again, seers intervene to help suppress the supernatural power of the child in order to prevent him or her from dying 'on purpose'. Early child death can also be due to maltreatment in the world of totems which are associated with every individual member of a family lineage. Every member of a lineage has a totemic animal double and the illness or death of the totem will inevitably affect the human double in the same way. Thus understanding the meanings of death prevention names also requires a good understanding of aspects of the kinship system. Note that people involved in trying to keep a child alive can also rely on a shrine to help protect the child, especially when external supernatural forces such as witchcraft are identified as the sources of the mothers' and babies' misfortunes.

Documenting naming systems like the Eegimaa one provides information on the speakers' worldview, including the categorisation of the supernatural world and the way the

<sup>4</sup>The methods used to suppress supernatural power are kept secret by seers. As a result we are not in a position to provide any details on how the fight with supernatural forces is carried out.



language speakers interact with entities in it. At the same time, by providing a record of the meaning of proper names and the relevant information on aspects of the kinship system, rituals, birth and death etc., such documentation inevitably contributes resources for research in disciplines such as philosophy and anthropology, considering the interest in proper names from these various disciplines, as mentioned in the introduction.

Name-giving practices not only give insights into the speakers' conceptualisation of concrete and abstract entities such as the people and spirits around them, but also give a good understanding of the way people solve problems they face in their environment, including those relating to life and death. Eegimaa traditional names, as we will show below, are therefore not mere meaningless labels. Investigating their meaning and aspects of the cultural settings in which they are grounded is an attempt to produce a 'multipurpose record' of the language and culture (Himmelman, 2006: 1), which can be used for research beyond linguistics. The multipurpose nature of language documentation, and its usefulness to other disciplines, is reflected in the claim that "ethnographical information is a crucial component of any language documentation" (Franchetto, 2006: 183). Topics which are likely to be of interest to anthropologists, and whose investigation in a multipurpose documentation is therefore important, may include pregnancy, birth, rituals, witchcraft and onomastics, including anthroponymy, etc. (Franchetto, 2006; Geschiere, 1997, 1998; Mbunwe-Samba, Mzeba, Niba, & Wirmum, 1993; vom Bruck & Bodenhorn, 2006). Thus traditional names and naming practices, wherever they can be found, should be an integral part of a documentation project, because of the wealth of linguistic and cultural information they contain. In many African societies like Eegimaa, traditional names have complex linguistic structures and meanings, and are therefore of interest to linguists and philosophers. At the same time, they include interesting cultural information and are, as a result, relevant to anthropological research.

Eegimaa traditional names are still given to many children. But nowadays, children who bear traditional names tend to be named after other relatives. Many traditional naming practices described in the sections below are either extinct or they are being abandoned. For example, very few children are given 'death prevention' names nowadays, partly because the infant mortality which these names is supposed to help fight has decreased significantly. Thus traditional naming practices represent an endangered genre among Eegimaa people, while practices such as name changing to avoid homonymy with deceased people are already extinct. Our examination of the structure of Eegimaa traditional names and naming practices reveals that their meanings contain important information on aspects of speaker's views and beliefs on pregnancy and birth. At the same time, they show a link with the supernatural world, which includes both protective forces like ancestors and spirits, and also malevolent ones linked to witchcraft.

**4. NAME GIVING AND TYPES OF BABY NAMES.** Traditionally, babies are not given names as soon as they are born. Among speakers of Eegimaa all babies, whether male or female, are called using common baby names, of which *Jiñappu* 'the little one' is the most common. Other common names include *apputi* 'the tiny one', *appu*, *fuppu* etc. All these common baby names share the root *-ppu* 'young, little' to which a noun class prefix is at-

tached; *ji-* in the case of *ji-ññabu* and *a-* and *fu-* for *a-ppu* and *fu-ppu*<sup>5</sup> respectively.

The name-giving time for individual babies may differ depending on the type of baby. For ‘ordinary’<sup>6</sup> babies, i.e. those who are believed to have no link to the supernatural world at their birth, names are generally given by their parents when they begin to show clear patterns of behaviour, for instance around the time they start crawling, walking or uttering their first words. However, children who are believed to have supernatural links, like those who are believed to have the power to ‘return’ to the world of ancestors or spirits, or those who may die as victims of external forces, are generally named later than ordinary babies (see §4.3 and §6). Their names are generally given by people who provide protection and ensure they stay alive, as discussed in §6 below. This tends to be groups of women especially if the mother undergoes the ‘birth giving ritual’. There are two main reasons why naming babies early is not common practice among Eegimaa people. The first may be attributed to a high rate of infant mortality and the uncertainty of whether the baby will live or not. Journet (1990, quoted in Valentine et al. 1996: 15) argues that this is linked to the identification of a child as a fully fledged human being as opposed to a spirit or an unsettled ancestor. The second main reason for not naming a child early in the traditional Eegimaa society is that the names of dead people, especially the young ones, are strongly avoided. When a child is given a name early, he or she is thereby anchored in society (Valentine et al., 1996). Thus if a child is named but dies, the name and any other name which may be a reminder of them, must as a result be avoided and will not be given to another individual.

In this paper we distinguish two main types of names: meaningless names whose meanings are not known or cannot be derived from the structure of the names, and meaningful names. Meaningful names can be further divided between circumstantial and descriptive names, and symbolic ritual names which we will refer to as death prevention names. We keep these two subcategories of meaningful names separate in our analysis, especially because of the particularity of the death prevention names, which involve ritual practices.

**4.1 MEANINGLESS BABY NAMES.** Meaningless names are those whose meaning cannot be traced. We include in this category names such as those illustrated in Table 1 below whose roots are not synchronically interpretable. These names may be innovated and there is no fixed inventory of these kinds of names. There is no evidence to show that some of

<sup>5</sup> The prefix *ju-/ji-* attaches to nominal roots denoting small entities or to derive diminutive meaning. However it is not clear what the morpheme *-ññ-* stands for. As for the noun class markers *a-* and *fu-/fi-*, they are used with nouns of human denotation for the first one, and with nouns denoting entities with a round shape, amongst other meanings. This suggests that the prefix *ju-/ji-* is used to describe the small size of babies, whereas *fu-/fi-* is used with the root *-ppu* for babies considered big. On the other hand, the name *a-ppu*, which takes the prefix of nouns of human denotation, suggests that the named child is grown and acts like other people.

<sup>6</sup> There are many signs which are believed to be indicators that a baby or child may have supernatural power. If the child who can speak says regularly that he or she will die, or talks about interacting with deceased people at night, there are chances that that child would be believed to have supernatural power. As a result the parents and relatives will begin to look for ways to save him or her. If a woman has had previous unsuccessful pregnancies, or has had newborn children who died in their infancy, any newborn who has a strange behaviour might be considered a spirit child who has the power to die and come back to life. A strange behaviour might be, for example, regularly letting out odd sounding cries at night, or giving the impression that he or she will die when ill.

these names previously had meanings which have now been lost. There is also no indication that they might have been borrowed from other speech communities before being phonologically integrated into the Eegimaa language. Notice that there is no grammatical distinction between male and female proper names in Eegimaa in that nothing in the form of the name itself indicates whether the name bearer is male or female.

TABLE 1. Meaningless names in Eegimaa

<i>Dímban</i>	<i>Áre</i>	<i>Baindala</i>
<i>Simaero</i>	<i>Alenda</i>	<i>Asungu</i>
<i>Jendena</i>	<i>Háresa</i>	<i>Yíwu</i>
<i>Bábo</i>	<i>Abbaa</i>	<i>Abibuli</i>

**4.2 MEANINGFUL AND CIRCUMSTANTIAL BABY NAMES.** Most traditional Eegimaa names are meaningful. Meaningful names include ritual names like the death prevention names discussed in §4.3 and §6 below, and non-ritual names like those that describe physical characteristics or patterns of behaviour of their bearers. Non-ritual meaningful names can be further divided into different subcategories based on what they describe. First, there are names which describe physical characteristics of individuals who bear them. These can either point at a prominent aspect of the name bearer's physic, as in (1a) and (1b), or they may describe the complexion of a person, especially if the skin tone is considered more pronounced than that of the average person, as in (2a) and (2b).<sup>7</sup>

- (1) a. A-mi-ga-at                      b. Já-fi-rin  
       CL1-thin-CL9-foot              CL11b.POSS-CL7-forehead  
       'The one with a thin leg.'      'The one with a salient forehead.'
- (2) a. Á-tuay                            b. A-ñuget  
       CL1-white                        CL1-black  
       'The white one.'                'The black one.'

Meaningful names may originate from nicknames used playfully to name children before they reach the stage when they can be given 'real' names. These nicknames, exemplified in (3), can become real proper names if they are established as the only names. However, as will be shown in §5, individuals may decide to change their names later in their life.

<sup>7</sup> Abbreviations: AGT = agentive; Arabic number after CL = conventional class number; Arabic number after SG or PL = number marker; CAUS = causative; CL = class marker; CPL = completive; EXCL = exclusive; NEG = negation; OBJ = object; PASS = passive; PL = plural; PL = plural; POSS = possessive; PREP = preposition; PRO = pronoun; REC = reciprocal; SG = singular; VEN = venitive.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (3) a. Á-ggu-bo<br>CL1-mess-CL5.PRO<br>'The one who messes his/her mouth (pouts).' | b. A-bejul<br>CL1.pout<br>'The one who pouts.' |
|--|--|

There are also names which are given to children based on patterns of their behaviour. Sometimes these names are joking names which end up being established as the only names. This is exemplified in (4a), which is the name of a child who seems to trivialise everything. For example, it could be a child who plays with dangerous things like fire despite his or her parents' attempts to stop them. Example (4b) is another illustration of a name which describes the behaviour of a child who is probably doing things that are not expected for her age. The names illustrated in examples (5a) and (5b) describe emotive reactions from children in their early infancy. Example (5a), repeated from (3a), is the name of a child who regularly spreads their lower lip (possibly when crying), while (5b) is the name of one who continuously gazes at people or things. Finally, examples (5c) and (5d) are names that describe children's early interactions with adults. In this case the names are those of children who give away anything they get hold of to people around them.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (4) a. A-lejeh-en<br>CL1-trivialise-CAUS<br>'The one who trivialises things.' | b. A-jah<br>CL1-be.intelligent<br>'The intelligent/clever one.'          |
| (5) a. A-bejul<br>CL1-pout<br>'The one who pouts.'                            | b. E-perul-o<br>CL3-scream-AGT<br>'To scream at the top of one's voice.' |
| c. Jí-a<br>offer-AGT<br>'The giver (the unselfish one).'                      | d. Á-ssum-a<br>CL1-be.good-AGT<br>'The nice one (unselfish).'            |

Some baby names are near homonyms with names of adults who are still alive or who have died old enough. Structurally, they are derived by alternating the prefix on an adult's name with the 'diminutive' singular prefix *ju-/ji-* (see Sagna (2008) for an account of the morphology of Eegimaa, including the noun class system). There are two main types of names in this subcategory of baby names. In the first case, the diminutive singular prefix is used on the name of an adult to indicate that one of the people who bears the name is smaller or younger than the other. This is exemplified in (6) below.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| (6) a. Jí-jambaraŋ<br>CL11-jámbaraŋ<br>'The small/younger Jámbaraŋ' | b. Jí-misa<br>CL11-misa<br>'The small/younger Amisa.' |
|---|---|

The second case where the diminutive prefix is found in meaningful names is with family names<sup>8</sup> like *Sámbu* and *Saña*. Here, the combination of the diminutive prefix with family names indicates that the name bearer is a child born from a family or lineage. Interestingly, with these names, there is a strong association of names to biological gender in the sense that some names are names for women whereas others are exclusively for men. Note that nothing in the structure of those names indicates the gender of the name bearer. *Jútom* ‘The small/young Átom’ and *Jissaña* ‘The small/young Assaña’ in (7a) and (7b) are names for women, whereas *Jisambu* ‘The small/young Sámbu’ and *Jitendenj* ‘The small/young Atendenj’ exemplified in (7c) and (7d) are male names.

Apart from the naming conventions outlined above, we are not aware of any other noteworthy naming conventions in the traditional Eegimaa society.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| (7) a. Jú-tom<br>CL11a-Atom.lineage<br>‘The small Átom.’ | b. Ji-ssaña<br>CL11a-Sagna.lineage<br>‘The small Asagna.’ |
| c. Jí sambu<br>CL11a-Sambu<br>‘The small Asámbu.’        | d. Ji-tendenj<br>CL11a-tendenj<br>‘The small Atendenj.’   |

**4.3 SYMBOLIC RITUAL NAMES FOR CHILDREN OR DEATH PREVENTION NAMES.** Symbolic ritual names are given to infants to prevent them from dying. These names are given to children who are believed to have supernatural power which enables them to come to life and die again and again from the same mother. We refer to these children, who are called *úññil úila* ‘flying children’ in Eegimaa, as ‘spirit babies’. As pointed out above, children with supernatural power are identified through their unusual behaviour, for example producing very strange screams regularly during the night time only. If they are old enough to speak, the way they talk about their imminent death to join ‘their real parents’ from another world can also be an indication that they need special attention. Babies who need special names are those whose mothers have had many unsuccessful pregnancies or have had children who died very early in their infancy. Another subcategory of children who are given death prevention names is those who are victims of external malefic forces like witches, as discussed in detail in §6.3 below. Examples (8) and (9) below illustrate death prevention names for children. The forms and meanings of these proper names are discussed in detail in §6.3 below.

<sup>8</sup> There is a fixed inventory of surnames among Eegimaa people. These are *Basen* (Bassène), *Manga*, *Sambou*, *Saña* (Sagna) and *Tendenj* (Tendeng). Eegimaa surnames are also found in other Jóola groups and in some other neighbouring ethnic groups of Southern Senegal. Their meaning is not known. Among Eegimaa people, surnames are always inherited from the children’s father.

- |        |                |    |                         |    |                            |
|--------|----------------|----|-------------------------|----|----------------------------|
| (8) a. | Gu-yyah        | b. | Gu-ond-i-bo             | c. | A-fog-or-i                 |
|        | CL8-grave      |    | 3PL-inter-2SG-CL5.PRO   |    | CL1-bury-REC-PASS          |
|        | 'Graves'       |    | 'They inter you there.' |    | 'S/he gets buried around.' |
| (9) a. | Ju-sotten      | b. | Ji-bbanno               |    |                            |
|        | 2PL-deceive    |    | 2PL.EXCL-return.VEN     |    |                            |
|        | 'You deceive.' |    | 'We have come back.'    |    |                            |

**5. NAME-CHANGING AMONG EEGIMAA SPEAKERS.** In the Eegimaa society, there is no restriction on the number of names that an individual may have. It is therefore possible for a person to have two, three or more names. In the past, name changing was common practice among Eegimaa speakers. Different situations in an individual's life could lead them to adopt a new name. Name changing is, however, less practised nowadays, partly due to the significant conversion of most Eegimaa people to Christianity, and to Islam to a lesser degree, and also because of possible administrative complications. The main situations that lead to changes of name are the following.

**5.1 HOMONYMY AVOIDANCE.** In the traditional Eegimaa society, one of the most radical changes of proper names took place to avoid homonymy between a living individual and a deceased person. Before the introduction of official registrations, and the mass conversion to Christianity and Islam, which required an individual to have a unique name or set of names throughout their life, people bearing the same name as a deceased person were required to change that name and take up a new name. If a young person died, any older member of the community who bears the same name would be required to change name by choosing a new name themselves. No specific ritual is associated with name changing to avoid homonymy with a deceased person. However, if a person died of old age, their younger namesakes could keep their name. Name changing to avoid homonymy is therefore done to help bereaved members of the community overcome the trauma of losing one of their relatives, especially if the latter dies too young. When a person changes their name, he or she informs other members of the community, and the new name spreads by word of mouth. Everyone who uses the old name is simply told about the new one. If the person who is changing their name has more than one name, only the one they have in common with the deceased person must change.

## **5.2 NAMES REFLECTING A NEW SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS**

**5.2.1 A NEW NAME FOR THE NEW KING.** When a man is enthroned as a king, he is given a 'royal name' which is chosen for him during the enthronement ceremony. It is not clear who exactly chooses the new name for the king, but the new name is announced to the assembly, which is composed of the inhabitants of all the villages of Mof-Ávvi. The king of Mof-Ávvi, the former kingdom of ten villages, which is the homeland of the



Eegimaa speakers, is a sacred person rather than a political leader. His main role is as an intermediary between humans and God.<sup>9</sup> Once a man is enthroned, he is symbolically considered as dead and born again as a king who is surrounded by a lot of prohibitions. For example, he has his personal roads, and cannot share a meal or drink with ordinary people. The king has the central role of ensuring that there are sufficient rainfalls for rice growing seasons, and in that sense, the people's lives are entirely dependent on him. It is because of his highly sacred status that the king is required to give up his old name or names, and take a new one to mark his radical change of status from an ordinary individual to a sacred entity placed between the world of humans and that of the ancestors. His new name must take over the old ones, and becomes the only term of reference and address. For example, the name of the last king of Mof-Ávvi, *Áfilejo*, before he became a king, was *Ñátato*. His royal name took over the old one, to the point that very few people remember the latter today. The names of the kings of Mof-Ávvi generally have meanings. For example, the name *Sibbaysondo* 'there are spears in' has a meaning, which refers to the contention surrounding the choice of the name bearer as king. Similarly the royal name *Áfilejo* comes from *a-filet-jo* CL1-look.for-CL11.PRO 'He look for it (kingship)', and was given to a person who ended up becoming a king after the one who should have been enthroned ran away. There are reports that the name *Áfilejo* was borne by two different kings. This may suggest that the kings' names are taken from a closed set of names. However, because the set of kings' names that most speakers can remember is very small, it is hard to argue with certainty that the names given to kings come from a closed set.

**5.2.2 NEW NAMES FOR THE 'WEALTHIEST'.** Individuals whose hard work and know-how leads them to a significant increase in the number of their cattle can give themselves praise names which could end up becoming their main names, to praise their achievements or their wealth. The person who has just chosen a new name publicises it in their immediate environment and the name spreads by word of mouth from one village to another. Traditionally, wealth was evaluated by the amount of rice one had and by the amount of one's livestock. While the real amount of rice in a loft is often hidden once it is taken home from the fields, the livestock are more visible and give bragging rights on occasions where the hard work of individuals is publicly acknowledged. These new names are usually praise names which end up being the main names of address and reference. It is only when such a praise name takes over the old name that we can talk about name changing. But notice that even when these 'wealth names' take over the old ones, the latter can still be used interchangeably.

Proper names whose function is to praise an individual's wealth generally refer to cattle. They are morphologically complex, generally consisting of verbal stems to which subject prefixes and inflectional suffixes are attached. In all the examples in (10) below, the subject prefix *su-* indicates the class membership and the number values of the missing subjects – *sí-be* 'cows'. These proper names can also have a sentence-like structure with no overt

<sup>9</sup> Eegimaa people practise a monotheistic religion and believe in one God called *Ala Émit* 'the owner of the sky'.

subject as in (10b) and (10d), where the underscore is used to link the verb and its object.<sup>10</sup>

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| (10) a. Sí-ilen-e<br>CL4-make.fly-CPL<br>‘They (cows) make (birds) fly.’    | b. Su-kkob_e-bbag<br>CL4-dent_CL3-bucket<br>‘They (cows) dent a bucket.’    |
| c. Sí-pimbor-e<br>CL4-face.each.other-CPL<br>‘They (cows) face each other.’ | d. Si-mmen_n-aw<br>CL4-be.many_PREP-you<br>‘They (cows) are many with you.’ |

Example (10a) illustrates a new name chosen by an individual whose livestock are, according to the meaning of the name, so many that the loud sound made by the herd of his cattle when they move makes birds fly away out of fear. In (10b), the individual’s name shows that the individual’s livestock are so many that when his cattle come to drink at the well, much confusion is created by the large number of cows, so that they end up denting the bucket from which they drink. Example (10c) suggests that the individual’s cows are so numerous that when they take one direction, a number of them get confused and end up taking a different direction, resulting in them facing the others later. Finally, the name in example (10d) is one which suggests that the name bearer has many cattle.

In summary, it was common practice among Eegimaa speakers to take a praise name to describe one’s wealth in livestock. Much work was required to possess means to buy a cow. In such a context, individuals who had many livestock could choose to change their names to reflect their new status as wealthy people. Though some of the speakers who took wealth names were still alive at the time the data presented here was collected, this kind of name changing is not practised anymore. This is partly due to the fact that money has taken over successful cattle raising and rice growing as the main criteria for the evaluation of wealth in the community. Thus documenting proper names provides an insight into cultural practices which are becoming less and less relevant to current speakers of Eegimaa.

## 6. DEATH PREVENTION NAMES

**6.1 A SHORT TYPOLOGY OF DEATH PREVENTION NAMES.** Death prevention names are, as pointed out in §4.3 above, names given to a category of children who are believed to be at risk of dying in their infancy, to ensure that they survive. There are two categories of children who are considered to be at risk of dying. The first category is that of children who are believed to have supernatural power and a strong link to the supernatural world of spirits and ancestors to which they belong. As pointed out in §3.2, they are believed to have the ability to choose to return to the supernatural world by dying shortly after they are born. The fundamental difference between ordinary babies and those that may be called ‘spirit babies’ is that the latter have the power to choose to be born from the same mother, only to die when they choose to. It is not the case that these children are killed by an external spirit.

<sup>10</sup> The underscore is used to indicate that the words it links could be separated or moved to different positions. However with proper names they are pronounced as part of one single word.

Rather, they are believed to have the power in themselves. As soon as that supernatural power is diminished or suppressed through a ritual, the link with the supernatural world is broken and the child is expected to survive. Giving those children death prevention names is part of the strategy to break the cycle of birth and death, and to ensure their long-term survival. The other category of children who are considered at risk is those who are victims of external forces such as witchcraft, as discussed below. These children are not believed to have any supernatural power. They are also given death prevention names as part of the strategy to protect them from malevolent forces.

The existence of death prevention names has been reported in a number of African societies including the Akan of Ghana (Agyekum, 2006; Obeng, 1998), the Yoruba (Oduyoye, 1982), the Efik and the Ibibio (Mensah & Offong, 2013; Mensah, 2009), and the Igbo in Nigeria, as popularised by Chinua Achebe's *Ogbanje* children in his novel *Things Fall Apart* (Achebe, 1958). In Northern Senegal death prevention names are also used in societies like the Wolof and the Seereer (Journet, 2001; Journet-Diallo, 2008). Names like *Yeggul-ngon* 's/he has not reached the afternoon', *Dematina* 's/he has left again' and *Sagar* 'floorcloth' serve as examples of children's death prevention names in Wolof.

Giving death prevention names to try and prevent the death of a child is common practice among the Jóola people (see 6.3 below) and their neighbours, including the Bañounk and Manjaku who live in the Gambia, the Basse Casamance area of Senegal and Northern Guinea Bissau. Manjaku names like *Dikaya* 'is going nowhere' and *Kéehu* 'dead/ the one who dies' are examples of names given to children to indicate that these are 'spirit children' on the one hand, but also to assure their survival on the other hand.<sup>11</sup> The crucial difference between practices in the African societies mentioned above and those like the Jóola is the fact that, in addition to death prevention names for children, women who have difficulties having children are also given kinds of death prevention names, which may be referred to as child-bearing names, to help them solve problems of unsuccessful maternity. The death prevention names, or child-bearing names for women, are given to prevent the death of their children. As we show in the next section women who undergo the *Gaññalen* 'birth ritual' change their names to take child-bearing names.

Journet (2008) points out that giving child-bearing names to mothers is a practice which is peculiar to Jóola people. While the literature at our disposal shows that this is predominantly the case, it is nonetheless clear that other ethnic groups and neighbours of the Jóola people like the Bañounk (see Lüpke & Storch, 2013), the Manjaku and also the Mandinka, whose practices are not studied here, also practise name changing for mothers. For example, in all cases where Bañounk people have been involved in the *Gaññalen* 'birth ritual' for an Eegimaa woman, both the mother and the child have been given protection names. While the extent of these practices in different ethnic groups still requires detailed accounts, it seems that name changing for women undergoing the birth ritual is an areal feature from the Gambia to Guinea Bissau through the Basse Casamance region of Southern Senegal.

In languages where they occur, death prevention names differ from other proper names, generally by their meanings, which are often characterised by reference to death or by denoting undervalued entities. Languages in which the structures of ordinary names differ

<sup>11</sup> The information on the Manjaku names and their transcription was provided by Julienne Bith Gomis who is a native speaker of the 'Tiur' dialect.

from those of death prevention names are rare. Akan is an example of such a language. According to Obeng (1998: 165) Akan ordinary names have morphological markers of gender distinction. For example, *Pipim* and *Pipimaa* are masculine and feminine names respectively. Obeng argues that death prevention names do not have any formal markers of gender distinction. Thus a name like *Beyeeden* could be either a male or female name. In languages like Eegimaa, there are ordinary names which are traditionally known as men's or women's names, but there is no morphological distinction between male and female names. An ordinary name like *Barama* (unclear meaning) does not have any marker to indicate whether the name bearer is male or female. Likewise, a death prevention name like *Çetulo* 'died coming', whose actual bearer is a female, could also be given to a male person.

While names referring to death often describe aspects of the context in which a child is born, those denoting undervalued items simulate a lack of interest in the baby and its survival, or indicate an attempt to humiliate the spirit which inhabits a child, in order to expel it, and keep the child and his or her natural (as opposed to supernatural) human attributes alive. The typical functions of death prevention names include, amongst other things, as Obeng (1998) shows, hiding the victim's identity and shaming children who are believed to choose to die to return to their supernatural world, thereby making them stay alive.

In the next section, we investigate child-bearing names for mothers and death prevention names for children. We examine the meaning of the traditional names and argue that mothers' names differ semantically from those of their children in a predictable way. We also discuss some new naming practices among Eegimaa speakers.

**6.2 CHILD-BEARING NAMES FOR STRUGGLING MOTHERS.** Among the Jóola people, women who struggle to have children, either because they have recurrent miscarriages or because their children die in their infancy, can be given death prevention names if they undergo the *Gaññalen*<sup>12</sup> 'birth ritual' ceremony in an attempt to save their children's lives. Through this ritual, unsuccessful mothers seek protection from an entity of their choice, which may be a shrine owned by a group of women from a village, a district or an association of women. Protection may also be sought from an individual (a man or a woman) who owns a shrine which is powerful enough to discover and fight the malefic forces which are responsible for the unsuccessful pregnancies or infant mortality. However, in this case, there is generally no name-changing involved. Contrary to 'wealth names' discussed in §5.2.2 above, child-bearing names are not chosen by their bearers, but are given to them by people in charge of the birth ritu-

<sup>12</sup> This ritual is known as *Kañalen* in Jóola Fogny and Jóola Kaasa which are the main *linguae francae* among the Jóola languages and most other languages of the Jóola area. The name *kañalen* is also used in languages like Manjaku where this ritual is also practised. The *Kañalen* with name-changing for women is a feature which Journet Diallo (2008) describes as a peculiarity of Jóola people. The information we collected from the Manjaku people indicates that name-changing is also practised, but generally by people who have relations with Jóola people. This suggests that name-changing as part of childbearing practices may well have been borrowed from the Jóolas. However, we do not have material on death prevention practices amongst the Manjaku people to confirm such a hypothesis. Questions regarding the origins of this ritual, and the similarities and differences of these practices between different ethnic groups who live in the same areas as the Jóola people, are left for future research.

al or the protection of the mother and the child. Failed pregnancies and infant mortality are believed to have different causes, most of which are outlined in the next section.

**6.2.1 PRINCIPLE CAUSES OF MISCARRIAGES AND INFANT MORTALITY.** Miscarriages and infant mortality are attributed to causes of various kinds. They are believed to be due to witchcraft, in which case a person uses their supernatural power to act on the pregnant woman or to attack her infants, resulting in miscarriages or child death. They may also be a result of the *gánig* curse, which loosely translates as ‘cursing with a stake’. This is a practice which consists of planting a stake of a chosen height in a secret place in the mangrove swamp, and uttering a curse which condemns the children of an enemy named there to die from the action of some supernatural force, when they reach the height of that stake. This is often done by people out of revenge for a very serious offence like being betrayed, humiliated or publicly dishonoured.

Unsuccessful pregnancy and infant mortality may also be due to maltreatment in the world of totems associated with each family lineage or sub lineage. Different lineages or sub lineages have a totemic animal and each individual human member of a kin group has an animal double of the same species as other members of the lineage or sub lineage (Palmeri & Gazio, 1995). Any illness or death of a totemic animal inevitably results in the illness or death of its human double. Members of a lineage have the capacity to negatively affect the fertility of a woman from their own lineage. This can happen, for example, when one or more members of that lineage feels disrespected or neglected when one of their female members marries into another lineage.

Last but not least, if a shrine is completely abandoned by a family or owed a debt,<sup>13</sup> it is possible that it impedes the ability of both male and female members of that family to have descendants, until it is taken care of again or until the debt is paid. Whatever the source of unsuccessful motherhood, the role of the protective entities is to identify the causes of unsuccessful pregnancies or infant mortality with the help of seers. Then an outstanding debt is paid, and any damage done to anyone is repaired, before the mother and the child are taken under the protection of the protective entity.

**6.2.2 GAÑÑALEN ‘CHILD-BEARING RITUAL’.** We pointed out earlier that after losing several children or after having successive miscarriages, unsuccessful mothers can resort to an array of practices in an attempt to save their pregnancies or the lives of their newborns. One of the practices we identified is the *Gaññalen* ‘child-bearing ritual’.<sup>14</sup> This consists of seeking protection from an association of women during pregnancy or after a child is born.

After getting pregnant a woman can leave her home (with her husband’s support) to settle temporarily in another village in order to escape from the external forces which are responsible for her unsuccessful pregnancies and the recurrent loss of her newborns.

<sup>13</sup> In the Eegimaa belief system, a shrine is an entity with a visible and an invisible part. The visible component is the altar where libations and sacrifices are made. The invisible part is composed of supernatural entities such as ancestors and spirits who give the shrine its power. If a debt is owed to a shrine, it means that it is owed to the forces which hold power.

<sup>14</sup> There are many practices used to fight miscarriages and infant mortality when they are believed to be due to supernatural forces. In this paper, we focus on those that require name-changing for mothers and giving death prevention names for their children.

In that village she seeks the protection of a shrine owned by a group of women who will adopt her and help her with her pregnancy and the early life of her child. Eegimaa speakers generally do their *Gaññalen* ‘child-bearing ritual’ in one of the ten villages of Mof-Ávvi or other closely related Jóola communities where varieties of Eegimaa are spoken. In recent decades, some Eegimaa women have sought help from other Jóola people such as the Jóola Fogny and also non-Jóola communities such as the Manjaku and the Bañounk peoples.

In her new adoptive village, the woman seeking help is given a new name, which hides her identity from her supernatural tormentors. She is given a *fúññalenum* ‘sacred stick’ upon her arrival in that village, and another one when she is taken back to her home by her protectors and presented to her community of origin with her new name and her child.

When the child is born, he/she is given a death prevention name of the type discussed in §6.3 below by her protectors. After successfully giving birth, the woman lives among her protectors till her child is considered big enough and less vulnerable, before being taken back to her conjugal home. Both the woman and her child will remain under the protection of the shrine and their protectors throughout their lives.

Note that there are also cases where a woman seeking to protect her newborn can leave her home only after giving birth, to live in a village from which she will only return when her child is grown enough. If the child and the mother are entrusted to the shrine of a group of women the mother’s name will be changed and her child is given a baby’s death prevention name. Alternatively, the mother can use that time to elude the forces which threaten the life of her child and only come back when the child is deemed less vulnerable. In this case there is no need for the mother to change her name or for the child to be given a death prevention name.

It is also possible for a woman who struggles with motherhood to seek the protection of the shrine of women in her own village or district. Here again, the child is given a death prevention name, while name changing for the mother is also required. As pointed out above, mother’s death prevention names are best categorised as child-bearing names. This is because the main reason for changing the names of the mothers is to ensure that they have successful pregnancies and that their children survive.

**6.2.3 THE NAMES OF MOTHERS.** The *Gaññalen* ‘birth ritual’ is common in the Eegimaa society, as it is among other Jóola people (Journet, 2001; Journet-Diallo, 2008; Sapir, 1993). Women are given new names by their protectors to hide their identity from bad spirits, witches or the entities responsible for their unsuccessful pregnancies or the death of their newborns. The meanings of their new names are testimonies of their individual struggles, which may be the inability to have successful pregnancies, their bad experiences at the maternity place if their babies do not survive the birth, or the repeated death of their children. The names may also indicate a resignation to the fact that their efforts to give birth seem to be in vain. Consider the examples in (11) to (13) below.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (11) a. Fi-litten-e<br>CL7-learn-CPL<br>‘It (womb) learns.’ | b. Fu-maccor-e<br>CL7-mix.up-CPL<br>‘It (womb) is confused.’ |
|---|--|



- In recent years, women from the Eegimaa villages and Eegimaa speaking migrants to cities who have founded associations to help unsuccessful mothers (see 6.2.4 below), have begun to use words from other languages as child-bearing names for mothers and death prevention names for their children (see 6.3 below). These include place names like *Dagana* ‘name of town in Senegal’ and the French loan *Turnal* (probably from *tournant* ‘turning’). While the motivation for using a place name as a child-bearing name is not clear, the meaning of a name like *Tournal* comes from the fact that the woman bearing this name has been to many places seeking help, before coming to the place where this name was given

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to her.

As pointed out above, the meanings of Eegimaa child-bearing names for women are generally given to women to describe mothers' struggles and frustrations, but also their hopes as well as their state of mind and emotions. The recurrent themes revealed from an analysis of these mothers' child-bearing names also include the failure of a child to develop in the womb, and the inability to successfully give birth at the maternity place. It is important to bear in mind that the birth ritual described here takes place in a society in which a married woman who cannot give birth is viewed very negatively. The infertility of men is generally not recognised. As a result, there are no rituals for men which can be compared to birth rituals for women. As argued in Sagna (2008, 2012), in the Eegimaa noun class system, the noun denoting a sterile woman is assigned to Class 3, along with nouns denoting other special humans (including social deviants) rather than the normal humans from Class 1. Thus the inability to give birth is generally seriously traumatic for the woman, as suggested by names like *Jahali* 'worried' and those discussed above.

**6.2.4 THE GAÑÑALEN RITUAL IN THE CITY.** Rural exodus has been an important aspect of the lives of Eegimaa speakers in the last few decades. From a seasonal exodus in the first three decades following the independence of Senegal in 1960, rural exodus has become more and more permanent in the last thirty years, with more speakers settling in different cities of the country. The first generation of settling migrant women in the City of Ziguinchor founded an association from the Eegimaa-speaking villages with a view to help women facing maternity problems. This association was eventually split into two, reflecting affiliations to new religions. The separatist group was composed of women from new converts to Islam for whom the use of alcohol and the consumption of pork meat used in sacrifices to shrines are prohibited. This association was named *Bágarambuba* 'collection of small grand-boubou dresses', reflecting the dressing styles of local Muslims. The other group of women was composed of followers of the traditional religion, new converts to Christianity and some Muslim women. They continued to make offerings to their shrine in wine, and to sacrifice pigs when required. This association was named *Bateibas* 'collection of Teibas fabrics' because Christians commonly wore a kind of fabric called Teibas. Religious syncretism is common practice among Eegimaa people. It is common practice for practising Christians and Muslims to be involved in the traditional religion rituals such as libations and birth rituals.

The names given to women in these associations include Eegimaa meaningful names such as *Jipareol* 'get ready for her (because her case is a difficult one)', but also names like *Lislam* 'Islam' and place names such as those illustrated in Table 2 below. The choice of place names as child-bearing names for women is not motivated by any characteristics associated to such places, as our interviewees from both cities and villages pointed out. But the name *Lislam* 'Islam' was given to a woman from one of the Eegimaa villages because her child-bearing ritual took place in an association run by Muslim women.

TABLE 2. Place names as child-bearing names

Name	Meaning	Name	Meaning
<i>Addean</i>	‘Name of village’	<i>Louga</i>	‘Name of a city in Senegal’
<i>Lislam</i>	‘Islam’	<i>Guinée</i>	‘Guinea’
<i>Mauritanie</i>	‘Mauritania’	<i>Sandaga</i>	‘Market place in Dakar (Senegal)’

Notice that although migration to cities has strongly increased since the foundation of the women’s associations in urban settings, very few recent migrant women have joined these associations. Most notably, children of members of these women groups do not appear to be part of them, possibly because of the increased influence of new religions or simply because of a lack of interest. This indicates a decrease in the *Gaññalen* practices in the cities, as is also the case in villages.

Overall, we have shown that names given to women who struggle to give birth encode aspects of their experience during pregnancy or as mothers who lose children regularly at an early age. Mothers’ names are a kind of death prevention name, but contrary to children’s death prevention names discussed in §6.3, it is not the death of the name bearer that such a name attempts to ward off, but that of their children. As we will see below mothers’ names are also often given in different languages. This suggests a kind of language contact situation which can be classified as a religion-based one in that it involves a ritual to shrines, which are the main religious entities in the traditional religion of Eegimaa people as well as other peoples around them.

**6.2.5 CHILD-BEARING NAMES FROM OTHER LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES.** Most women from Mof-Ávvi (the homeland of Eegimaa speakers) who undergo the *Gaññalen* ‘child-bearing’ ritual generally do so in one of the ten villages of the Eegimaa speaking area, and are generally given Eegimaa names such as those illustrated in (11) to (13) above. It is, however, also common for women to do their rituals in another Jóola or a non-Jóola community. The names given to them in these cases are either in Eegimaa or they are names from the language of the community where the ritual takes place.

Communities that tend to give Eegimaa names to the Eegimaa *uññalena* ‘mothers who did the birth-giving ritual’ are immediate neighbours of Eegimaa speakers, who are generally bilingual in Eegimaa. These include speakers of the Bayot language and Bañounk Gubéeher. For example, the Eegimaa names *Wafulebo* ‘there is nothing there (maternity place)’ and *Ebelembo* ‘lit: throwing there (at maternity)’ are names given to women by speakers of the neighbouring Bayot and Bañounk Gubéeher languages respectively.

Communities that give names in languages other than Eegimaa are those whose languages are regional *linguae francae*. These include the Jóola Kaasa who are located to the west of Mof-Ávvi, and the Jóola Blouf and the Fogny, who live north of the River Casamance. Bañounk people who are not immediate neighbours of Eegimaa speakers tend to give child-bearing names and also death prevention names for babies in Jóola Fogny. For example, a child-bearing name like *Abbukkakken* ‘lit: She sends (someone) to care for (her child)’ is an adapted (phonologically integrated) form of the Jóola Fogny name illustrated in (14a). This is a sentence-like name given by protectors originally from Niamone, a Bañounk village located near other Jóola Fogny villages, and who live in Ziguinchor, the

main city of the Basse Casamance area in Southern Senegal. The name of the woman indicates that she has entrusted her child (a boy in this case) to someone, until the child reaches the point where he would be brought home. Example (14b) is an animal name from the Jóola Fogny language, which was given by Bainounk people from Niamone to a woman after a few failed attempts at giving birth. Note that there is no special belief surrounding the use of different languages to name women who undergo the *Gaññalen* ritual. The most important requirement to successfully help a woman overcome infertility problems caused by external forces is to change her name.

- |      |    |   |    |   |
|------|----|---|----|---|
| (14) | a. | a boñ ka-woken<br>CL1-send-CL9-hold<br>'She entrusts (someone) to raise (her child).'   | b. | kumba<br>pig<br>'Pig.'                            |
| (15) | a. | A-kam-bo-ñaa<br>CL1-do-CL5.PRO-like.that<br>'She does it there (tries it) for nothing.' | b. | Ka-ramben-i<br>CL9-help-2SG.OBJ<br>'To help you.' |

Example (15a) is also a Jóola Fogny sentence-like name given by speakers from another Bainounk village (Djifanghor) to a woman, suggesting that she gets pregnant in vain, because of her continual failure to give birth. Finally, example (15b) is structurally a non-finite verb with an object suffix. The name comes from Jóola Kaasa, and indicates the involvement of a community in helping a woman who is facing maternity issues.

Examples of women's birth-giving names in (14) and (15) above are evidence that Eegimaa speakers have recourse to other Jóola and also non-Jóola people to solve problems of motherhood. The names given to women are, as pointed out above, either Eegimaa names or they are names from the major Jóola *linguae francae*.

Mothers' child-bearing names discussed in the sub-sections above are semantically different from children's death prevention names discussed below.

**6.3 DEATH PREVENTION NAMES FOR CHILDREN.** Children who are believed to be at risk of dying very young, and whose mothers have undergone the child-bearing ritual, are given death prevention names. Among Eegimaa speakers, when a child dies, it is said that he or she has 'returned' (to the world where he or she came from). Similarly to mothers' names, most death prevention names for children are given by women from Mof-Ávvi in Eegimaa. Children who die very young come in two main categories. The first category may be referred to as 'spirit children', called *uññil úila* 'flying children' in Eegimaa. These are children who are believed to have supernatural power and the ability to come to life, only to die and 'go back' to the supernatural world where they came from. They are seen as deceivers who make humans believe that they are normal human children when in actual fact they are spirits. Death prevention names are part of a strategy to break their cyclic trips between life and death.

The second category of 'dying' children includes those who are victims of external forces such as witches and shrines, or are victims of maltreatment from the world of totems,

as described in §6.2.1 above. The functions of children's death prevention names include hiding the identity of the newborn if it is believed that it is being stalked by malefic forces, or they serve to discourage them from dying if they are identified as spirit children who are believed to be behind their own death.

Newborn children who are identified as belonging to these two categories are given death prevention names, which amongst other things, describe their experience with death but also the impact they have on their parents and protectors, as well as the efforts made by their protectors to keep them alive. Death prevention names such as *Guyyah* 'graves', *Guondibo* 'they inter you there' and *Afogori* 's/he gets buried around' which are illustrated in (16) below indicate that the newborn children are believed to be spirit children who have already been born, died and buried a few times.

- |         |           |    |                            |    |                            |
|---------|-----------|----|----------------------------|----|----------------------------|
| (16) a. | Gu-yyah   | b. | Gu-ond-i-bo                | c. | A-fog-or-i                 |
|         | CL8-grave |    | 3PL-inter-2.SG.OBJ-CL5.PRO |    | CL1-bury-REC-PASS          |
|         | 'Graves'  |    | 'They inter you there.'    |    | 'S/he gets buried around.' |

The name *Jibbanno* 'we are back' in (17b) below is also a death prevention name given to a spirit child to suggest that he or she has been recognized from a previous birth into the humans' world before dying. As for the name *Jusotten* 'you deceive' in (17a), it is given to a spirit child who is believed to deceive its parents by raising hopes that it will live, only to die soon after it is born. This name, which is a way of stating that no one believes the child will stay alive, can be seen as a means of challenging the spirit child and discouraging it from 'going back' to the world of the dead.

- |         |                |    |                      |
|---------|----------------|----|----------------------|
| (17) a. | Ju-sotten      | b. | Ji-bbanno            |
|         | 2PL-deceive    |    | 1PL.EXCL-return.VEN  |
|         | 'You deceive.' |    | 'We have come back.' |

The meaning of the death prevention names in example (18) indicate the effect that 'dying babies' have on their parents or their protectors. *Pibulo* 'screams reach us' describes a situation where screams from women alert other members of their group who are protecting the life of the child, that the latter shows worrying signs that may lead to his or her death. *Agalembo* 's/he ruins it (work)' is the name of a child who regularly shows worrying signs of death, thus preventing her parents and protectors from focusing on their work in their fields. Finally, *Akkalenjayi* 's/he torments her/his mother' is a name whose meaning describes the emotional and mental state of the mother in her attempt to keep the child alive.

- |         |                     |    |                         |
|---------|---------------------|----|-------------------------|
| (18) a. | Pib-ulo             | b. | A-galem-bo              |
|         | scream-VEN          |    | CL1-ruin-CL5.PRO        |
|         | 'Screams reach us.' |    | 'S/he ruins it (work).' |

- c. A-kkalen-jay-i  
 CL1-torment-mother-2SG.POSS  
 ‘S/he torments her/his mother.’

Similarly to mothers’ death prevention names, there are also children’s death prevention names from languages other than Eegimaa, mainly Jóola Fogny and Jóola Kaasa. For example, the Jóola Fogny name *Ajaŋa* ‘girl’ was given by Baïnounk speakers from Niamone to an Eegimaa boy whose mother, *Abukkakken* ‘she entrusts to raise (her child)’, was losing female children. The strategy here consists of confusing the malefic force by pretending that the newborn is a female (assuming that the evil entity is looking for a female child), when it is actually a male. Another example is the name *Amenkuyaak* ‘he has many graves’, which is a name from Jóola Fogny given by Baïnounk people from the village of Niamone to a child from the Eegimaa community, where the name became phonologically integrated in the language as *Ammenguuyah* ‘he has many graves’, and eventually reduced to *Guyyah* ‘graves’.

Example (19) illustrates names that were given to Eegimaa ‘spirit children’ from the Jóola Fogny language. Example (19a) is a name given to shame a spirit child who is believed to have been born before, in order to show that it has been recognised and thereby discourage it from dying. (19b) is another name given in Jóola Fogny by Baïnounk speakers from the village of Djifanghor, further east from the homeland of the Eegimaa speakers,<sup>16</sup> to suggest that the named ‘spirit child’ is believed to be deceiving their parents and making them believe that he/she will stay alive.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (19) a. Ji-lañ-ulo<br>1PL.EXCL-return-VEN<br>‘We have come back.’ | b. Ha-butt-a<br>CL9-deceive-AGT<br>‘The deceiver.’ |
|---|--|

The names in example (20) below are from Jóola Kaasa. The death prevention name in example (20a) is the name of a spirit child who is believed to be wasting people’s time and efforts to save it because no one believes it will stay alive, whereas (20b) is the name of a child (original *ketugay* in Jóola Kaasa) who is believed to be a spirit child who has been coming and going between life and death.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| (20) a. a-yokk-en<br>CL.a-tire-CAUS<br>‘He tires (people).’ | b. Çet-u-gay<br>die-2SG-tire<br>‘Die till you get tired of it.’ |
|---|---|

As is the case for mothers (see 6.2.5 above), communities such as the Bayot and the Baïnounk Gubëeher who tend to be fluent in Eegimaa give death prevention names in Eegimaa. The names *Gubajuti* ‘they (parents) do not have you’ and *Jiçefullun* ‘the little one

<sup>16</sup> Note that these Baïnounk speakers are in contact with Eegimaa speakers who live in the village of Djifanghor.



who dies in Fullun (Brin)’ are two death prevention names from the Bayot and the Bān-nounk Gubēeher respectively. Those whose languages are major *linguae francae* like the Jóola Kaasa, and minority groups who live in areas where those languages are *linguae francae*, tend to give names in these *linguae francae*.

In recent decades, women from the Eegimaa speaking villages have begun to give death prevention names in other languages in addition to the traditional names of Eegimaa. Those names include geographical names like *Conakry* ‘Capital City of Guinea’ and meaningful names like the Jóola Fogny inspired names such as *Eñakki* ‘it (death) pulls you’ and *Ak-kobeçet* (from Fogny or Kaasa Akobeket) ‘he waits for death’.

Notice that generally, children’s death prevention names are from the same language as that of their mothers. There are however, cases where the names of the mother and the child are chosen from different languages. The name *Ayokken* ‘He tires’ in (20a) is a Jóola Kaasa name given to a child whose mother has the Eegimaa name *Aannuliró* ‘She was brought down inside (maternity)’. These names were given by speakers of Bān-nounk Gabēeher from the neighbouring village of Djibonker. The death prevention name *Amul-yaakaar* ‘he/she has no hope (of survival)’ from the Wolof language was given to a child whose mother has an Eegimaa child-bearing name, *Jipareol* ‘get ready for her.’ Another example is *Alamuta* ‘Put your faith in God’, which is a death prevention name from the Mandinka language given to a child whose mother has a place name (*Dagana* ‘Town in Senegal’) as a child-bearing name. Note that no special significance can be attributed to the use of different languages to name a mother and her child.

In the next section we compare meaningful child-bearing names and death prevention names and show that, by analysing the meaning of those names, it is generally possible to tell whether the name bearer is a child whose life is being saved or a mother who is undergoing the *Gaññalen* ritual.

#### 6.4 COMPARING MOTHERS’ AND CHILDREN’S DEATH PREVENTION NAMES.

Death prevention names are, as pointed out in previous sections, names given to children as part of the process of trying to prevent them from dying. We argued earlier that mothers’ names, which we referred to as child-bearing names, are also a type of death prevention name and showed that in Eegimaa, death prevention names, in addition to their function of trying to assure the survival of children, also tell the story of those individual children or their mothers. Our analysis of Eegimaa death prevention for both children and their mothers shows that by examining the meanings of these names, it is possible to predict, without knowing the individual bearers of those names, whether the bearer of a particular name is a mother who is undergoing the child birth ritual, or a child born or kept alive through such a ritual.

Table 3 compares mothers’ and babies’ death prevention names in Eegimaa. It is important to bear in mind that the mothers and the children whose names appear in the same row in the table do not have a child-to-mother relationship. For example *Çetulo* ‘died coming’ and *Wafulebo* ‘There is nothing there’ are names of the same woman. The former is her death prevention name as a child, whereas the latter is her child-bearing name as a mother.

TABLE 3. Comparison between mothers' and children's death prevention names

Mothers' names		Children's names	
<i>Wafulebo</i>	'There is nothing there (maternity)'	<i>Çetulo</i>	'Died coming'
<i>Jahali</i>	'Worried'	<i>Habutta</i>	'The deceiver'
<i>Kerobia</i>	'Why go there (maternity)'	<i>Ajakkay</i>	'He has left'
<i>Fumaccore</i>	'It (womb) is confused'	<i>Jibbanno</i>	'We have come back'
<i>Animeyyan</i>	'She stops the progeny of a family'	<i>Amatter</i>	'He causes doubt'
<i>Ebelembo</i>	'Throwing it away there'	<i>Gubajuti</i>	'They don't have you'
<i>Farugaye</i>	'Tired womb'	<i>Akkobeçet</i>	'He waits for death'

Table 3 shows that mothers' names tend to refer to their experience when they try to give birth at the maternity place, the failure of the womb to develop a successful pregnancy, but also their frustration and desperation as well as their mental and emotional state following repeated unsuccessful attempts to give birth, or recurrent loss of children in their infancy. Children's death prevention names, on the other hand, include themes such as departure (death), burial, return (re birth) and doubt about the survival of the child-bearing the death prevention name. Thus, mothers' names can be seen as life-giving names to help their maternity, whereas children are given what may be termed life-saving names to prevent them from dying. Notice that with new names like place names, it is not possible to predict which of the mother and the child bears the name of a country or a capital city. The reasoning behind the naming practices in Eegimaa and other familiar Jóola languages seems to be lost with place names when they are used in the birth-giving ritual.

**7. CONCLUSION.** Proper names in Eegimaa generally have meanings beyond their use as pointers to name bearers. We analysed different categories of meaningful names and showed that Eegimaa proper names include those that describes aspects of the bearer's physic and behaviour in their infancy. We also showed that name changing was common practice among Eegimaa people, especially to avoid homonymy with deceased members of the community. Name changing was and is still practised in the context of the *Gañ-ñalen* 'birth ritual', where women are required to change their names to hide their identity from external forces which are believed to be the cause of their miscarriages or the repeated death of their newborns. Our analysis of death prevention names, child-bearing names and other kinds of meaningful names has shown that many aspects of the Eegimaa world view are encoded in those names. We argued that understanding the meanings of those names therefore provides a good insight into the Eegimaa speakers' kinship system, especially the relationship between humans and their totems, as well as an understanding of the speakers' conceptualisation of aspects of their natural and supernatural environment, including spirits. Documenting proper names, as we have argued, goes beyond providing a simple list of names. It involves investigating aspects of the life, religion and social organisation of the speakers, and provides important resources for research in disciplines other than linguistics. Furthermore, such documentation provides insights into the language contact situation of speakers with other language communities with whom they interact as part of the birth ritual practice to save the lives of their newborns.

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## APPENDIX: A LIST OF NAMES IN EEGIMAA

Mothers' death prevention/child-bearing names		Children's death prevention names	
<i>Ebelembo</i>	'Throwing it away there'	<i>Ayokken</i>	'He tires'
<i>Akammbañaa</i>	'She does it there (tries it) for nothing.'	<i>Akkalenjai</i>	'S/he torments her mother'
<i>Fumaccore</i>	'It (womb) is confused'	<i>Akkobeçet</i>	'He waits for death'
<i>Akkakkanor</i>	'She manages'	<i>Pibulo</i>	'Screams reach us.'
<i>Farugaye</i>	'Tired womb'	<i>Joutibo</i>	'This has not worked for you'
<i>Kulayibo</i>	'They pray around for you'	<i>Gabajuti</i>	'They don't have you'
<i>Eccati</i>	'[God] has not rewarded you'	<i>Ajakkay</i>	'He has left.'
<i>Wálalal</i>	'Ideophone – crying for help'	<i>Firiso</i>	'Eating it (rice)'
<i>Jipareol</i>	'Get ready for her'	<i>Jibbanno</i>	'We are back'
<i>Guccenori</i>	'They fight over you'	<i>Ekketubo</i>	'Died coming'
<i>Filittene</i>	'The womb has learnt'	<i>Çetuolo</i>	'Died coming'
<i>Fuanne</i>	'It (the womb) has dropped down'	<i>Ammenguyyah</i>	'Has many graves'
<i>Wafulebo</i>	'There is nothing in the maternity'	<i>Guutemburo</i>	'They hope for life'
<i>Abambaññil</i>	'She finishes little children' (they all die)	<i>Gutebe</i>	'They have carried [the child]'
<i>Jahali</i>	'Worried'	<i>Afogori</i>	'S/he gets buried around'
<i>Animeyyay</i>	'She stops the progeny of a family'	<i>Jiçebo</i>	'You die there'

Meaningless names		Ordinary meaningful names	
<i>Asingina</i>		<i>Gújjin</i>	‘Bulls’
<i>Ávva</i>		<i>Jaare</i>	‘Little woman’
<i>Ávvavvae</i>		<i>Jahojoma</i>	‘Little ugly one’
<i>Batojel</i>		<i>Babúhoji</i>	‘That ugliness’
<i>Açaŋ</i>		<i>Jaññil</i>	‘Little child’
<i>Bakkual</i>		<i>Ñuoh</i>	‘Cold’
<i>Bañam</i>		<i>Sibañiro</i>	‘They are put in’
<i>Cáwle</i>		<i>Sibbay</i>	‘Spears’
<i>Egeb</i>		<i>Sifenembo</i>	‘Make graze’
<i>Ákkakkae</i>		<i>Sikki</i>	‘Deep’
<i>Húpira</i>		<i>Lámutubo</i>	‘Did not suffer there’
<i>Bakkoja</i>		<i>Esseni</i>	‘[God] It empowers you’
<i>Kaneri</i>		<i>Baraddagor</i>	‘Drag oneself about’
<i>Ñafa</i>		<i>Batama</i>	‘Enormous navel’
<i>Heto</i>		<i>Sibetomañ</i>	‘They drop iron there’

Serge Sagna  
eakkut@gmail.com

Emmanuel Bassène  
aynenut@ucad.sn



## Multilingualism, affiliation and spiritual insecurity. From phenomena to processes in language documentation

Pierpaolo Di Carlo  
*University of Florence and  
 University at Buffalo*

Documentary linguists have often been urged to integrate language ideologies and other topics more closely to ethnography than to linguistics in their research, but these recommendations have seldom coincided, in literature, with practical directions for their implementation. This paper aims to contribute to filling this gap. After re-considering current documentary approaches, a case study from a documentation project in NW Cameroon is presented to show how an ethnographically-informed sociolinguistic survey on multilingualism can lead to progressively deeper insights into the local language ideology. The methodological implications that this research perspective brings to both documentary linguistics and language support and revitalization projects are discussed. A number of practical suggestions are finally proposed, illustrating the importance of language documentation projects being carried out by multidisciplinary teams.

**1. INTRODUCTION.** One of the first lessons anyone aspiring to do documentary linguistics according to contemporary standards is exposed to learning is that projects must be tailored to suit the specific environments, both social and linguistic, in which they are carried out. The inclusion of ethnographic data and, more generally, of field methods reminiscent of the ethnographic method also figure amongst the most often recalled best practices in language documentation (see on both points, amongst others, Haviland 2006, Hill 2006, Himmelmann 2006, Dobrin 2008, Dobrin et al. 2009: 46–7, Woodbury 2011: esp. 174ff.).

Although these methodological directions have been made explicit in a number of generally well-known publications, and do not seem to have been directly criticized, it would be deceptive to state that they have been accepted and are now practised by all documentary linguists. No doubt, the fact that these directions in many cases imply, for instance, that documentation projects be led by multidisciplinary teams, has been a practical obstacle (if only financially) for their actual implementation (see Austin & Grenoble (2007: 22) for a somewhat pessimistic opinion about their chances of being implemented in general). However, there are also other, deeper reasons for the somewhat common resistance to these best practices. For one thing, the structuralist tradition in linguistics might well be in conflict with them (see, e.g., Dobrin et al. 2009 and Woodbury 2011). However, it is also true that the relative abundance of general statements has not coincided with equally abundant illustrations as to how these methods can materialize in actual projects (see also Evans 2008: 343). The overarching goal of this paper is to offer one such illustration in the hope

that, by way of contributing to the creation of a wider repertoire of research possibilities, it will help documenters be more creative (and responsible) in designing their projects.

In order to do so, I will discuss one part of my ELDP-funded documentation project on Ngun and Ajumbu, two tiny villages of Northwest Cameroon where two Bantoid languages, respectively Mungbam [mij] and Ajumbu [muc], are spoken.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the part of the project I will summarize here (§3) does not concern these two languages in particular but, rather, it is focused on an essential aspect of the language ecology they share with the surrounding communities, i.e. individual multilingualism, which I have approached via an ethnographically-informed sociolinguistic survey. The presentation of data from this survey (§3.2) will be followed by progressively deeper explorations of its significance: first, in terms of the language ideology they help uncover and, hence, towards a ‘thicker’ (in the sense of Geertz’s (1973) notion of ‘thick description’) understanding of the sociocultural processes that still ensure its reproduction (§4).

The paper’s central aim is to extract suggestions of general methodological interest from a particular research experience. Therefore the case study is preceded by a brief methodological outline constructed on the basis of a contrastive view between the two opposite poles describing the ideal continuum of approaches to language documentation projects (§2). This is followed by a discussion about the possible implications that an emphasis on language ecologies, in its turn requiring the integration of ethnographic work into language documentation, may engender in language documentation as well as in language support and revitalization (§5). In fact, in §5 I will propose that the two extremes of the documentary continuum can be included in one and the same project to produce, via *integration* of ethnographic methods, what in fact is meant to be a new, comprehensive approach to language documentation.

**2. TWO EXTREMES OF AN IDEAL CONTINUUM.** Different proposals as to how one can approach language documentation can be found in a number of publications (e.g. Himmelmann 2006; Woodbury 2005, 2011; Lüpke 2010c).<sup>2</sup> Reviewing all of them here is not among the goals of this paper. Rather, inspired by Woodbury 2011, my intent is to gain some insights on the models informing documenters’ approaches to their work. I will try to do so via the contrastive analysis between two opposite documentary models, lying at the ideal extremes of an ‘abstraction vs. observation’ continuum: the top-down, ‘ancestral code’ model as opposed to the bottom-up, ‘phenomenological’ model.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The research on which this paper is based has been supported by generous funding from the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (under Individual Postdoctoral Fellowship 0180) and the U.S. National Science Foundation (grant BCS-0853981). I would like to thank my two collaborators in the field (and students), Angiachi Demetris (University of Buea) and Angela Nsen Tem (University of Yaounde 1), as well as our many linguistic consultants who made the work presented here possible. Special thanks go to Jeff Good for his moral and scientific support for this and related multidisciplinary research in the Grassfields, and for his insightful comments and bibliographic suggestions on an earlier version of this paper. This research would not have been possible without George Ngong Bwei Kum’s assistance as a guide and counsellor. Responsibility for the content of this paper is the author’s alone.

<sup>2</sup> The majority of the methodological works seem to have focused especially on the kinds of community involvement, an aspect of language documentation projects’ design I will not be concerned with in this paper.

<sup>3</sup> In the following I will use ‘model’ and ‘approach’ interchangeably.

These two models stem from different theoretical assumptions, focus upon different research objects, and are aimed at distinct goals. Here I will deal with them by limiting my attention to their actual documentary potential, that is, their ability to capture real-world linguistic facts, where ‘linguistic facts’ are intended to refer both to the broad range of people’s linguistic habitus (a set of dispositions acquired through learning to speak within particular contexts; see Bourdieu 1991: 21–22, 81ff.) and their materializations, i.e. linguistic practices. Since ethnography provides us with the most reliable tools to get as close as possible to documenting sociocultural (including linguistic) facts, both approaches will be looked at also in the light of ethnography’s basic assumptions (see, e.g., Blommaert & Jie 2010).

**2.1 THE ANCESTRAL CODE EXTREME.** This approach aims to ‘document’ what is left of an assumedly internally uniform language which used to be spoken by the entirety of a given community but whose current domains of usage or overall number of fluent speakers have shrunk in recent years.

For the fact of focusing on a ‘vanishing voice’, such an approach very often implies that the researcher selects the kinds of linguistic behaviors to be recorded and analyzed (and, in fact, drives the speakers themselves to select their linguistic behaviors, cf. Dobrin & Berson 2011: 194) so as to filter the targeted ancestral language out of the contemporary language ecology of the community. This purist view *per se* naturally leads to the so-called ‘Boasian triumvirate’ (i.e. grammar, dictionary and texts) as one of its quintessential outcomes. Also, due to the relative paucity of domains of actual use of the ‘pure’ ancestral code (assuming a pure ancestral code ever even existed) in a community speaking an endangered language, this very approach usually coincides with a strong reliance on elicitation as a data collection method: by documenting daily discourse or other spontaneous linguistic practices in a community undergoing processes of language attrition or shift—instantiated by pervasive bi- or multilingualism and code-switching—would expose the researcher to a complex array of data which in no way could lead to the systematic ‘documentation’ (in fact, selective reintegration) of the ancestral language. As a consequence, this approach usually coincides with an overall secondary role accorded to real-world linguistic phenomena. However, it often does have practical premises and consequences in the real world.

It is important to realize that this approach is very often linked with a sort of political agenda, however embryonic or subconscious, in the researcher or the target community or both (see, e.g., Dwyer 2006, Czaykowska-Higgins 2009, Harrison 2007, 2010). In some cases, the documentation takes place as a consequence of an explicit and autonomous plan of the community (as is often the case in North America and Australia). In others (the norm in Africa, for instance), it is the researcher who initially identifies a situation of endangerment and then, through his contacts with the community, contributes to the spread of a discourse over language that prizes maintenance of the ancestral code. Although this discourse, unavoidably political in nature, may be already present in the community, the presence of a foreign researcher—as a norm deeply unaware of the local micro-political situation—usually has the effect of reviving certain identity feelings or, in somewhat worse scenarios, of backing the political agenda of a local conservative faction at the expense of the modernist one. These risks often go unnoticed by the documenters as they do not pay attention to (or are just not trained to observe) social facts (see Crippen & Robinson 2013:

130–1 for exemplary cases).<sup>4</sup>

It would be a mistake, however, to limit our view of this model to the possible risks or fallacies it may engender. In fact, by operating a high-level selection and, therefore, a reduction of the variables at stake, it offers an effective environment for linguists to develop tools for a detailed linguistic analysis which, in its turn, is a prerequisite for any other kind of study one wants to conduct on the target community, on the languages that are part of its ecology, or on its culture. Moreover, linguistic descriptions made possible by adopting this approach are highly generative of innovative questions and perspectives within linguistics as a whole.

**2.2 THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXTREME.** Under this rubric I collapse two elements of Woodbury's (2011) typology: the "documentation of contemporary communicative ecology" and the "documentation of an emergent code". He had already pointed out that the line between the two "may be blurred indeed" (2011: 180) so it is not surprising to see them merged. However, the kind of reasoning lying behind my choice of not keeping them separate does not surface in Woodbury's paper and I will make it explicit below.

One basic methodological feature of the ancestral code approach is that the object of research is predetermined and, in order to focus on it alone, the researcher applies more or less conscious selections of the data to be included in the documentation. Put roughly: the researcher identifies *a priori* their research object and then goes to the field looking for it.

At the logical opposite lies a method that does not focus on 'one language' but, rather, on the observable communicative practices of a given community: for lack of better terms, I call this the 'phenomenological approach', i.e. giving prominence to phenomena, which are "things as they are given to our consciousness, whether in perception or imagination or thought or volition" (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). The possibility that one of the codes used in the community may be in the process of being abandoned is not central here (if not for funding issues) as it is not ontologically connected with the method itself. In its essence, this model promotes the observation of the linguistic practices as they surface in naturally-occurring communicative events and proscribes any *a priori* assumptions, including the 'search for the pure code'.

Speaking of method, in a phenomenological approach the corpus will be theorized according to criteria of representativeness of the whole array of possible linguistic practices allowed to happen in a given community. Documenters, that is, are expected to select what is to be included in their documentations not on the basis of what language is recorded—like 'ancestralists' would do by carving the ancestral code out of a potentially heterogeneous database—but, rather, on the basis of the language ecology of the target speaker community or of the portions of this ecology that they have identified as particularly important. This orientation requires that documenters are acquainted with the communicative ecology they plan to target prior to the actual design of the project. To know a given 'communicative ecology' means having a clear view not only of the different languages or varieties present in the repertoire of the targeted speaker community, but also of the registers and the genres through which discourse is articulated, as well as of the language ideology

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<sup>4</sup> It must be acknowledged, however, that projects are generally funded to document endangered languages, and this sets the stage for a politically-oriented, ancestral focus to take prominence.

permeating the community's communicative behaviors (i.e. the ideas shared by the community members concerning language and its uses: see, e.g., Woolard 1998). These are aspects that a purely linguistic research cannot uncover as they lie closer to the objectives of an ethnographic inquiry. As a consequence, anyone adopting the phenomenological approach should accord ethnographic data a primary role.

Finally it must be remarked that, in principle, this approach brings more reliable information on a given real (i.e. not only linguistic) state of things than does the former, which is more idealistic. At the same time, it can cause one to get lost in the meanders of one group's cultural complexity.

**2.3 THE PLACE OF ETHNOGRAPHY.** I have mentioned ethnography several times so far but what do I mean precisely? Ethnography is a discipline commonly evoked in language documentation literature. However, different authors have looked at it from different angles. Focusing only on those who have dealt with it for methodological purposes, some, like Harrison (2005), have emphasized the field-based nature of ethnographic research, reminding that this enables one to (i) understand documented grammatical structures in their cultural significance and (ii) identify grammatical structures that might not be otherwise visible. Others, like Hill (2006), have concentrated on the 'ethnography of language', that is, on the fact that the very act of speaking or writing a language is per se a culture-specific practice loaded with particular values. In what appears to be one of the very few papers dedicated to the place of ethnography in language documentation, Franchetto (2006) offers a list of matters of interest to ethnographers and anthropologists and some advice on how to go about researching them, hoping to provide documenters with a to-do list for making their work better equipped for that kind of audience, which is seen as a form of 'Other' by the documenters themselves.

None of these angles, nor their cumulation, exhausts the multi-faceted nature of ethnography. However, it must be clear that ethnography is more than basic, easily-collectable cultural information about, say, a given group's ritual customs, economic strategies or history. For one thing, ethnography must include research on the social organization of a group, which can ultimately lead the ethnographer to answer in detail the question 'who is who for whom and why?' in the group.

The ancestral code model *per se* does not require the inclusion of ethnographic data but, rather, that of superficial cultural information (e.g. rituals, economic strategies) that are useful to characterize the group's identity *as a whole*. In fact, the ancestral code model entails that ethnographic information is given a limited role as this is likely to have a disruptive effect on the unit, both linguistic and cultural, which alone makes it possible for the purist perspective to come into being.

By contrast, in phenomenological works the kind of selection documenters are expected to apply (see 2.2 above) would force them to consider ethnographic data as an integral part, not an ancillary excursus, of the documentation. At a closer look, this integration is required not only in the corpus theorization phase of a project, as I said above, but also in its actual unfolding. For one thing, if language is to be captured mostly in culturally-situated natural performances, then the documenter must pay attention to (amongst other things) how the specific contexts, discourse genres and, importantly, participants are conceptualized by the speaker community (this is Hymes' (1986) ethnography of speaking *in nuce*) as

TABLE 1. Summary of contrasts between the ancestral code approach and the phenomenological approach to language documentation

	ANCESTRAL CODE MODEL	PHENOMENOLOGICAL MODEL
GOAL	Document one bounded language	Document communicative practices in a community
PRIMARY TARGET	“Pure” performances in one specific language, not necessarily the only one spoken in the target community	Discourse-in-context regardless of the language(s) used
DOCUMENTARY METHOD	Mainly elicitation or staged communicative event	Mainly recordings in natural settings
QUINTESSENTIAL OUTCOMES	Grammar, dictionary, texts and orthography	Documentation of language-in-use, discourse genres, pragmatics, language ecologies
	Teaching material	No teaching material but new cultural products portraying community's "realities" (e.g. maps, heterogeneous ethnohistories, etc.)
BEST IF	Community is committed to preservation and is in search for instruments to develop and implement language support or revitalization policies	Community is not expecting any easy-to-use material to further their language maintenance agenda
		Some linguistic description has been done already (the “ancestral code approach” may be instrumental in providing data for such descriptions and, hence, can be seen as a first documentary phase)
IMPLICITLY ASSUMES THAT	Speech communities are discrete social entities (monolingual)	Each situation is unique and documentary work must be singularly responsive
	Different languages mean different peoples	Relation between culture, language, and ethnicity can be fluid
RISKS	Strategic reduction of variability may become misleading oversimplification	Too much or too complex data (“too phenomenological”)
	Work fails to be documentary as it is led by purist views	Community feels exploited for ends that have little to do with its life ( <i>pace</i> Austin & Sallabank 2011:18)
REQUISITES	Strong commitment to reproduce “traditional” linguistic scholarship (i.e. Chomskyan, typology, historical-comparative, etc.)	“Shut up and listen” research attitude. Or, the ability to resist immediate systematization of the unexpected.
	Curiosity	Curiosity <sup>2</sup>
RESEARCH ACTORS	One linguist can be sufficient	Multidisciplinary teams are required (a linguist, an anthropologist and, ideally, also a geographer)



these conceptualizations are likely to condition the meanings produced by speakers during the communicative events recorded as part of the documentation (I will return to this point in §5.2).

Of course, this integration requires the “*rapprochement* between linguistics and a reinvented anthropology that has returned from its postmodern holiday ready to engage with falsifiable empirical data again” (Evans 2008: 342). This is the model that I tried to follow more closely in my documentation project, part of which I will present in the next section.

### 3. LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT AND MULTILINGUALISM IN LOWER FUNGOM

**3.1 AJUMBU, NGUN, AND MULTILINGUALISM.** Ajumbu and Ngun are two tiny villages of about 200 inhabitants each, located at the northern fringes of the Cameroonian Grassfields, not far from the border with Nigeria, in an area known as Lower Fungom. This is a relatively small region (240 sq km in size, around the same size as the island of Guernsey) characterized by very hilly landscape, an ecology of forest-savanna mosaic type, and an astonishing degree of language density: here eight different Bantoid languages are spoken in thirteen villages, i.e. a ratio of one language per 30 sq km.<sup>5</sup> With the exception of Fang and Koshin, all the region’s languages are spoken by less than 1000 people (see Table 2).

Ajumbu is currently described as a language of its own (ISO [muc], see Good et al. 2011), while Ngun is a variety of Mungbam [mij], whose other varieties are Abar, Biya, Missong and Munken (see Good et al. 2011 and Lovegren 2013). After Hombert’s (1980) initial overview of the languages of this area, nobody had focused on them until a SIL sociolinguistic survey (Hamm et al. 2002) and, more recently, Jeff Good’s postdoctoral research (based at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig). Good later received a DEL grant (2009–2013) to work in the region with a team which I was part of and, finally, I got a 1-year ELDP postdoctoral fellowship grant (all the publications issued from these projects can be found at <http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~jcgood/lowerfungom.html>).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> In previous works (Di Carlo 2011, Good et al. 2011, Good 2012) the number of recognized languages was seven. Over the past two years, further research has suggested that Buu (not to be confused with Bu, where Laimbue [lmx] is spoken) be considered as a separate language. This recent insight still needs systematic verification and is not to be found in Ethnologue, where Buu still appears as an ‘alternate name’ for Mundabli [boe].

<sup>6</sup> Both Good’s DEL project and my ELDP postdoc fellowship have been designed from a ‘pure research’ standpoint and built upon the recognition that, for its linguistic and cultural specificities, the situation in Lower Fungom has much to offer to endangered languages research and linguistics as a whole. What I want to stress here is that none of the projects was in any way urged by the speaker communities we targeted, and the production of literacy material or any other kind of outcomes aimed at directly supporting local vernaculars has never been a priority (Good (2012) extensively deals with the reasons for these choices in both projects). It is then important to keep in mind that everything that follows comes from a research- rather than community-centered project. It is also relevant to note that the facts briefly sketched here may provide the reader with a reasonable account of why my ELDP project (entitled “Linguistic and ethnographic documentation aimed at identifying loci of linguistic and cultural reproduction in two communities speaking endangered Bantoid languages”) has been more concerned with understanding the dynamics of language maintenance of such ‘small’ languages in a highly multilingual region (not a unicum in sub-Saharan Africa) rather than with the documentation of one bounded lexicogrammatical code. Paraphrasing Good (2012: 35–36), if one recognizes the complexity of the area’s language ecology, one is bound to design a project “that takes the whole region as its research domain meaning that the community of research

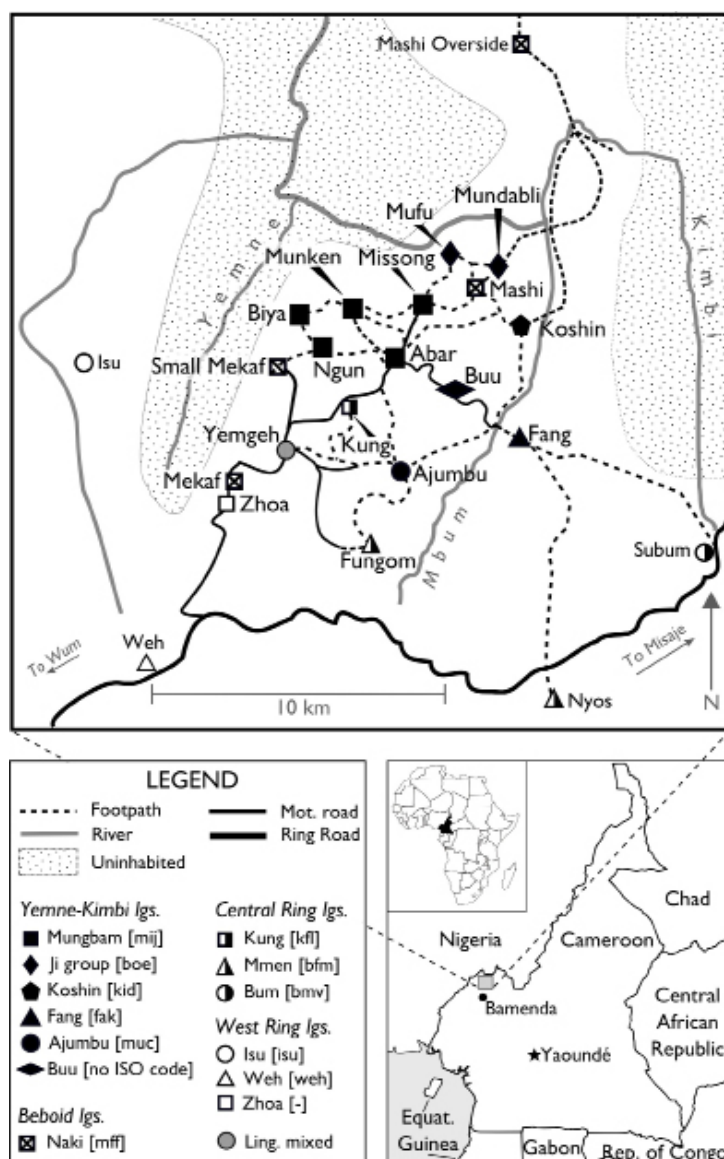


FIGURE 1. Map showing the distribution of languages and language varieties in Lower Fungom

does not overlap with a notion of speaker community but rather is something closer to a ‘microsprachbund’.” This is an implicit declaration of the inadequacy of the ancestral code model in the case of the Lower Fungom languages, although, as I will make clear in §5.1, both approaches have been followed in our projects.

As soon as fieldwork began, we realized that the main threats to the maintenance of local languages were, on the one hand, the ongoing process of depopulation of the area especially by younger generations (much in the same way as Lüpke (2009: 27) describes the Baïnouk situation in Senegal) and, on the other, the spread of the *lingua franca* Cameroonian Pidgin English (henceforth CPE). CPE was initially adopted in the Cameroonian Grassfields to facilitate communication between speakers of different languages (see Warnier 1979: 210–212; Menang 2004 on CPE more generally), but is now gaining momentum also in domains such as the home, where local vernaculars used to be exclusively used until few decades ago. This being said, the linguistic situation appeared to be one of relative vitality of vernaculars, even of those spoken by very small communities (i.e. below 200 people, such as Ngun and Ajumbu), as there are no known cases of people being monolingual in CPE, i.e. CPE has not creolized (Good (p.c.) points out that creolization seems to have taken place in some Cameroonian urban contexts like Limbe).

We progressively came to realize, however, that while intergenerational transmission seemed on the whole still rather effective at the level of individual languages, it was less so at the level of multilingual competence. Anecdotal observations made over the years by the different linguists who had visited the Lower Fungom area all pointed to the fact that, as a result of the spread of CPE from the 1960s onward, older generations seemed to show higher rates of competence in a number of local vernaculars than younger ones did.

TABLE 2. Languages and lects of Lower Fungom, with affiliations within the Bantoid, non-Bantu group of Niger-Congo, with approximate populations. Dotted line identifies possible language boundary not yet fully verified.

SUBGROUP	LANGUAGE	VILLAGE (LECT)	POPULATION
Yemne-Kimbi	Mungbam [mij]	Abar	650–850
		Biya	50–100
		Munken	around 600
		Ngun	around 170
		Missong	around 400
	Mundabli-Mufu [boe]	Mundabli	350–450
		Mufu	100–150
	Buu [no code]	Buu	100–200
	Fang [fak]	Fang	4,000–6,000
	Koshin [kid]	Koshin	3,000–3,500
Beboid	Ajumbu [muc]	Ajumbu	150–200
	Naki [mff]	Mashi	300–400
Central Ring	Kung [kfl]	Kung	600–800

To UNESCO as well as to the ‘ancestralist’ documenter this would be good news since multilingualism is often seen as being at odds with the vitality of endangered languages. By contrast, as many

scholars have stressed so far (e.g., Blommaert 2007, Lüpke 2009, Good 2012), African situations often do in fact escape models stemming from observations made elsewhere. Lüpke (2009), for instance, informs us that “[t]he majority of Bainouk speakers affirm that the long-established multilingualism in Joola languages and Mandinka is part of their identity, priding themselves on being able to communicate with all major linguistic groups of Casamance [i.e. the region where Bainouk varieties are spoken] and beyond”. To my knowledge, this is by no means the exception in Africa.<sup>7</sup> In the case of Lower Fungom, multilingualism seemed not only a central feature of the local language ecology but also, and importantly, an endangered one. The fact that multilingualism is usually presented as ‘endangering’ rather than ‘endangered’ (see Blommaert et al. 2012) added to the scientific interest of this situation.

For all these reasons I thought it important to include in my documentary project also some research activities that could enable me to gain insights into the distribution of multilingual competence within the Lower Fungom population. The rationale of this choice was as follows: by providing clues for documenting the local language ecology (crucially including language ideology) in a more reliable way than anecdotal observations would, such documentary endeavor could shed light on some linguistic behaviors and specific practices I had been exposed to but whose motivations I was unable to understand and, hence, properly describe (on the importance of documenting language ecologies in endangered languages research see, e.g., Mülhäusler 2003 and Grenoble 2011; on the importance of documenting language ideologies see, e.g., Hill 2006 and Haviland 2006; on the paramount importance of addressing multilingualism in any kind of linguistic and anthropological research, including documentation, in African contexts see Lüpke & Storch 2013).

### 3.2 THE 2012 LOWER FUNGOM SOCIOLINGUISTIC SURVEY

**3.2.1 THE QUESTIONNAIRE AS A MNEMONIC.** The data I briefly describe and comment on here come from a twenty-day survey I carried out in the Spring of 2012 with two Cameroonian postgraduate students (see fn. 1). Unlike ‘normal’ sociolinguistic surveys, we did not aim to produce a statistically relevant sample. In fact, as I have said in the previous section, our starting point was the well-rooted suspicion that, mostly on account of the increasing diffusion of CPE, multilingualism in the area is an endangered practice. As two additional concerns I might add here that (i) due to its centrality in the local language ecology, disappearance or decay of multilingual attitudes might also bear unpredictable consequences for the maintenance of local vernaculars and (ii) by being exposed to a high number of speakers of different languages and by interviewing them about how they deploy the lexicogrammatical codes present in their repertoires I could hope to gain insights into the local language ideology.

Thus, following an assumption close to that underpinning the Labovian notion of ‘apparent time’ (see Cukor-Avila & Bailey 2008), we favored the inclusion in our sample of elderly people, especially men, as these could be crucially instrumental in getting insights into the oldest level of language ideology reachable, i.e. the one we suspect used to support the devel-

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<sup>7</sup> What is exceptional, if anything, is to see it stated so clearly in a piece of scientific literature, an unsurprising deficiency according to Blommaert, who connects it to the rarity of “studies of actual language practices, with larger-scale sociolinguistic implications” (2007: 128).

opment of amazingly high rates of multilingual competence in the area prior to the diffusion of CPE (i.e. before ca. 1950s). We were able to interview a total of 97 individuals (54 men and 43 women; only 17 respondents aged 40 or less) from seven villages whose idiolects represented, to the linguist's eyes, four different languages (i.e. Buu, Koshin, Fang and Mungbam).

The tool we used during this survey was a questionnaire composed of three parts (see Appendix A). It must be stressed here that this questionnaire was not administered in written form (if only because many interviewees were illiterate) nor was it simply read aloud in its Pidgin translation. Rather, the questionnaire was used more as a mnemonic to guide what, in fact, were ethnographic interviews. This allowed the researchers considerable freedom in how to pose questions to different people and, importantly, in dealing at length with issues related with the reliability of the self-reported rates of multilingual competence (see below).

The first part of the questionnaire was aimed at obtaining as many details as possible about the respondents' biographical details that could be connected with their reported rates of multilingual competence. Therefore, we included a number of questions regarding (i) the various names the person had (see 4.2) and (ii) the provenance not only of the respondent's father, mother, and partner(s) but also of their parents and, if possible, also of some earlier ancestors. This was done on the basis of ethnographic data I had had the chance of collecting in 2010 concerning the importance of multilateral kin affiliations: as will become apparent in §4.2, the inclusion of this kind of biographical information has been fundamental to making the most of the questionnaire results.

The second part was intended to produce a list of all the lects (see §3.2.2 below) the respondent claimed to be competent in, accompanied by self-evaluative remarks about the claimed competence in each lect. The third part was aimed at gaining insights into the ideas or practices the respondents associated with each of the lects they claimed to be able to hear or speak, so aiming to uncover portions of their language ideology in a more direct way.

Anyone would legitimately expect that a sociolinguistic survey on these topics, especially multilingual competence, should be based on scientific evidence rather than on respondents' self-reported information. In this regard, I would like to stress two aspects: (i) the results I will show below were obtained through interviews (lasting no less than thirty minutes, often about one hour) during which the respondents were also presented with real-life scenes that, by being described in great detail, would reasonably decrease the chance that the respondent would distort reality; (ii) as I already said and will become more apparent in §3.2.3, the main goal of these interviews was to uncover not just how many lects or languages people spoke but, rather, their motivations for learning and using the different codes in certain contexts. That is, the survey's primary goal was to reveal aspects of the local language ideology that would have been otherwise very difficult to observe given the time limit of my fieldwork.

**3.2.2 LECTS AND LANGUAGES.** Before proceeding further, it is necessary to clarify why I am talking about 'lects' and, in the following, I will also add 'languages'. As I said in §3.1, within Lower Fungom a linguist would identify eight different languages which can be either one-village languages (i.e. Ajumbu, Buu, Fang, Koshin and Kung) or clusters of varieties (i.e. Mungbam, Mundabli-Mufu and Naki). However, according to local conceptions of language boundaries, in each village a distinct 'talk' is spoken, though some of them are acknowledged to 'rhyme' one another (i.e. what we call 'varieties'). From the locals' perspective, that is, in Lower Fungom, there are thirteen 'talks', one for each village headed by a chief:

these are called here ‘lects’. It is no accident that each lect is named after a specific village.

Selecting one of these two ideologies (i.e. the linguist’s and the locals’) as our exclusive perspective would have been arbitrary and misleading. For instance: it would have made no sense to a Buu man had I asked him if he could speak Mungbam or Mundabli-Mufu as these are labels created by linguists for linguists and do not necessarily reflect the reality as it is seen by the speakers. For these reasons I decided to duplicate all analyses I or my collaborators would do on the questionnaire database so as to be able to move from one perspective to the other and vice versa, hence assessing which of the two gave the most reasonable accounts for different research questions.

**3.2.3 BASIC RESULTS.** For our present purposes, and for reasons of space, it will suffice here to recall the following figures concerning the rates of self-reported multilingual / multilectal competence:

1. There are no monolingual speakers: at the very least, people speak one local lect plus CPE;
2. As an average, men have passive competence in 6 distinct languages, and can speak about 5 distinct languages;
3. As an average, women have passive competence in 5 distinct languages, and can speak an average of 4 distinct languages;
4. As an average, men have passive competence in 10 distinct lects, and can speak about 6 distinct lects;
5. As an average, women have passive competence in 8 distinct lects, and can speak about 5 distinct lects.

It is interesting to note that *all* of the interviewees have reported that the main motivation for them to achieve (at least) passive competence in one or another lect is to be able to detect malicious plans or gossiping that others (i.e. speakers of the lect) may be making against them.

Coming to active competence, we can sum up the diverse results about motivations by saying that:

6. In general, all the interviewees have stressed the fact that, by using a given local vernacular fluently with other speakers, their main goal is to induce in the latter a feeling of trust, unity and friendship. This, of course, is hoped to have direct positive consequences on their personal relationships, such as in obtaining favors or protection, if needed (paraphrasing Myers-Scotton (1993), I would call this a beneficial rights-and-obligations set).
7. CPE is universally recognized as a very convenient lingua franca that allows anyone to communicate freely in the whole of the surrounding region at large.
8. English and, to a lesser extent, French, are conceptualized differently from both local vernaculars and CPE. Schooling, which in the Northwest Region of Cameroon is conducted mostly using English, is the only means through which one can learn these languages but, on the whole, schooling has remained a mirage for the overwhelming majority of people in Lower Fungom until recently. Therefore,



- except for purposes of communication with the very few European and American visitors to the area, these languages are typically used to accrete the perception of the speaker's high social status and, hence, authority. Interestingly, several people told us that English is the language they most often use for rebuking their children.
9. Only English and French are reported to be spoken in order to increase one's prestige.
  10. Respondents stated explicitly that fluency in a number of languages is highly prized on account of the fact that, by so doing, one is able to 'feel at home in different places'. Some men even pointed out that, should their social condition deteriorate in the village where they are currently residing, the chances that they could be well received if not fully incorporated in other villages would be significantly higher thanks to their ability to speak fluently the local vernacular (see Cohen & Middleton (1970) on the notion of incorporation in African traditional societies).

One of the most noticeable hints we get from this highly succinct and partial overview comes from points 6–9 above: language choice implying any of the local lects is made irrespective of notions of prestige that are, in fact, projected only onto the colonial languages. This indicates that the Lower Fungom 'linguistic market' (see Bourdieu 1991: 37–9, 44) is structured in a way that largely escapes the model of polyglossia scales, dominant in mainstream sociolinguistics, where each language or variety is found at a given 'rank' reflecting the degree of prestige attributed to its speakers. The fact that Connell (2009) found the notion of prestige to be absent also in the linguistic market of another rural area along the Nigeria-Cameroon borderland, namely Mambila, is probably a sign of a common ideological background in non-urban, more traditional social contexts of this part of the world, in opposition to urban ones.

But then, if this traditional system ignores prestige, what are the factors that lead people to select one or the other language in interaction?

#### 4. INDEXES, IDEOLOGIES, AND MULTIPLE SOCIAL IDENTITIES

**4.1 ESSENTIALIST VS. INDEXICAL LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES.** The fact that prestige, except for the colonial languages—such as English and French—is not among the main symbolic assets negotiated in the local linguistic market, has tremendous consequences for our understanding of the local language ideology. Instead of the indexing of a social identity implying personal prestige, what we seem to be uncovering here is suggestive of a language ideology more oriented towards the indexing of affiliation with a given group, devoid of any behavioral or moral reflexes (see also point 10 in the above list of motivations for active multilingualism).

The available literature offers very few cases that can be compared to this situation (e.g. François 2012 and, to a somewhat lesser extent, Slotta 2012, both in Melanesian contexts). The reason for this, I believe, probably lies in the fact that scholars, even the closest to anthropology (such as, e.g., Le Page & Tabouret-Keller (1985) or Kroskrity (2000a)), have interpreted phenomena of language choice as consequential to what Irvine & Gal (2000) have called an 'iconization process'. Through this process "[l]inguistic features that index social groups or activities appear to be iconic representations of them, *as if a linguistic*

*feature somehow depicted or displayed a social group's inherent nature or essence*" (Irvine & Gal 2000: 37, emphasis added). It is this assumption, which informs the epistemological repertoires of most sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists, that seems to be fundamentally questioned by the preliminary findings from Lower Fungom, as well as from other rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa researched so far, i.e. Mambila (Connell 2009) and the Casamance region of Senegal (Lüpke 2009, 2010a; Cobbinah 2010; Lüpke & Storch 2013: esp. 13–47). At the very least, then, our findings open an entirely new window on the social motivations of traditional, i.e. pre-colonial multilingualism in sub-Saharan Africa.

What I want to stress here is that the use of a given set of phonological variants of American English in a North American city, as well as the switch to the language of the former colonial powers in a sub-Saharan metropolis, are intended indexes of certain social identities only because they are underpinned by a whole system of widely shared, interconnected and mutually conditioning assumptions about certain social groups and their distinctive linguistic behaviors. Although the standard term to refer to these acts in literature is 'indexes', these are, in fact, not "nothing more than a semiotic pointer to something else" (McIntosh 2005: 1921) as an index is defined in Peircean terms, but rather, essentialist claims. That is, these acts are means through which one can produce symbolic projections of one's (imagined) inner essence to be 'seen' by others (see also Silverstein 2003 for some important conceptual clarifications).

By contrast, when a young man from Lower Fungom uses his father's language (lect X) with his paternal uncle and then switches to his mother's 'native' (i.e. mother's father's) language (lect Y) when he meets an important man from his mother's village, and then switches to his mother's mother's native language (lect Z) when he meets a man from the Z-speaking village—although everyone could speak Pidgin—he appears to be doing nothing relevant to the definition of his personal qualities. On the contrary, what he is doing is just representing himself, depending on the context, as a member of the groups known to speak respectively X, Y or Z.

It does not seem to be too much of an audacious claim to say that here multilingual competence would allow one to symbolize affiliation with multiple groups. There are a number of social facts that corroborate this view. Naming customs, for instance, move in the same direction.

Before proceeding further, I would like to warn the reader that the following sections will take a strongly ethnographic detour, in order to explore language ideologies in Lower Fungom and their cultural milieu at progressively 'thicker' levels of description (Geertz 1973), i.e. aiming to come progressively closer to what one might define as 'the natives' point of view'. In §4.3.4 we will see that what at first might appear to be primarily ethnographic concerns turn out to have deeper significance for understanding patterns of language use and, thereby, for how one might structure a documentation project (§5).

**4.2 ON THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING MULTIPLE SOCIAL IDENTITIES.** Throughout Lower Fungom (and beyond) it is customary that children receive at birth (at least) two names: one is given by their (social, i.e. not necessarily genetic) father, the other by their mother's father. Under normal circumstances, the former is more likely to become the most used, and ultimately the only name recognized by Cameroon's bureaucracy. The latter, which is not a nickname but rather a real personal name taken from the repertoire of names peculiar to the mother's agnatic kin group, is used only by the child's maternal

kin. If the child's parents come from two different villages and, hence, are speakers of two different lects (if not two different languages according to the linguist's standards), then the child is expected to learn both and to use them in the appropriate circumstances. Simplifying somewhat, the father's language is the exclusive code to be used for communication with the paternal kin, whereas the mother's language must be used with the maternal kin. In essence, both personal names and linguistic competence seem to require that the child acquires distinct identities with respect to each kin group (see also Di Carlo & Good 2014 and, for naming customs in other societies of the Cameroonian Grassfields, Mbunwe-Samba et al. 1993).

Kinship does not exhaust all the possibilities for multiple affiliation (cf. Lüpke & Storch 2013: 22–33). In the existing anthropological literature there exist a number of cases indicating that the tendency towards constructing multiple social identities and maintaining (often latent) multiple networks of solidarity was common in traditional sub-Saharan African societies and could go far beyond agnatic kinship *tout court*. Due to space restrictions I can only hope the reader will be content with the following quotations:

Almost all recent studies of nineteenth-century precolonial Africa have emphasized that far from there being a single 'tribal identity', most Africans moved in and out of multiple identities, defining themselves at one moment as a member of that cult, at another moment as part of this clan, and at yet another moment as an initiate in that professional guild. These overlapping networks of association and exchange extended over wide areas. (Ranger 1983: 248)

[E]ach person was attached to several groups of solidarity. Depending on the context, one expected support from each and offered it to each of them. In times of conflict, one tried to mobilize the maximum contextually relevant group. Since traditional African societies were structured in terms of corporate groups, individual survival was possible only by being under the protective umbrella of one or another such group, and the larger and more powerful it was, the safer one was. (Kopytoff 1987b: 24)

To sum up, multiple affiliations constitute the individual's response to feelings of insecurity (cf. also Field 1960 on the pervasiveness of these feelings in rural Ghana).

The importance of speaking a given lexicogrammatical code to secure cooperation and affiliation with other groups is further made explicit in the following quote, which is an excerpt from an interview I held in 2010 with Buo Makpa Amos, a man from Missonng (parts of the excerpt of particular interest to the present discussion have been emphasized):

As my father told me, we were from Fang side, even in Bum side there were many of us. *When you people are cooperating you speak one language. If you speak one language, you cooperate.* As a group of relatives moves, the brothers may decide to split, each choosing a different place to stay. This is what happened to us. We left the early place in Fang side as a whole and arrived in Abar. From here we scattered. Now, we Bambiam from Missonng have relatives in Abar, in Buu, in Ngun. Each family attached itself to a village and therefore had to speak

the general language used there. *For example, we Bambiam attached ourselves to Bikwom and hence had to adopt their language; Bikwom people are attached to Bidjumbi and Biandzəm to form the village of Misson, and this is why they all had to use the same language, that is, Misson.* This is why all the descendants of the family that moved from Fang side now speak different languages.

It is difficult to understand why anthropologists seem to have rarely, if ever, considered the possibility that a macroscopic feature of Africa's sociolinguistic reality like multilingualism might be the main symbolic means through which these multiple identities could be enacted (but see Lüpke & Storch 2013: 19, 245ff. and *passim*). It is hard to dismiss the idea that there can be a strong link between this well-known cultural tendency and the diffusion of multilingual competence. The available evidence suggests that in Lower Fungom this link existed and, to some extent, is still functional.

**4.3 GOING THICKER: MULTIPLE AFFILIATIONS AS A RESPONSE TO INVISIBLE THREATS.** The degree of cultural depth we have now reached would probably be considered sufficient by most linguists and sociolinguists. However, as I will try to show in this and the following two sub-sections, by furthering our understanding of the sociocultural mechanisms connected with the response to feelings of insecurity, the role that language plays in this complex 'web of significance' (to cite Max Weber's famous definition of culture) will also become apparent. It is only by following this path that, in §5, the practical consequences for documentary linguists will emerge with due clarity.

**4.3.1 MULTIPLE AFFILIATIONS AND PERSONAL INTERESTS.** As the two quotations by Ranger and Kopytoff above suggest, a positive attitude towards constructing multiple social identities is to be generally connected with considerations of personal interests, of more or less immediate advantage on the part of the individual. Rather than attempting a typology of the possible advantages that such an attitude might secure, a pointless effort here, I would like to briefly outline some suggestions coming from anthropological literature on sub-Saharan African societies that allow us to imagine why such a need for security is so present in both traditional and postcolonial contexts.

Generally speaking, as secularized Westerners we are naturally inclined to interpret notions like 'advantage' and 'personal interest' mostly in material terms *tout court*. It would be a mistake to take it for granted that the same happens everywhere. For instance, in much of sub-Saharan Africa—no doubt including the Cameroonian Grassfields—local interpretations of the world seem not to admit the possibility that any given event may happen in the material world unless it is paralleled by some analog in the invisible world (see, e.g., Geschiere 1995: 22ff and, on Liberia, Ellis 1999: 13ff; Gausset 2010 (esp. 167ff.) and Baeke 2004 (esp. 147ff.) offer insights into this cultural feature as it is found in regions not far from Lower Fungom). Tensions towards the occult and, more in general, 'spiritual preoccupations' are pervasive in contemporary African societies to the degree that Adam Ashforth asserted "[n]o one can understand life in Africa without understanding witchcraft and the related aspects of spiritual insecurity" (Ashforth 2005: xiii, emphasis added). In other words, what these and a wealth of other studies indicate (such as, e.g., those in Moore & Sanders 2001) is that in no way can we isolate a material-only

economic sphere of social life in African societies, since everything material is generally perceived as being caused or shaped by occult forces and agents acting in the spiritual world. If so, it would be consequential to acknowledge ‘spiritual insecurity’ as having a very high (if not the top) position within the individual’s list of daily preoccupations.

How can one overcome such an all-embracing feeling of (spiritual) insecurity? This seems to be a matter of agency: since the supernatural powers enabling one to gain access into the invisible level of existence as an agent (as opposed to patient, which is believed to be the default condition of most people) can hardly be obtained individually by simply ‘purchasing’ them, the overwhelming majority of people have to rely on the services of specialists.

**4.3.2 AGENCY IN THE VISIBLE AND IN THE INVISIBLE WORLDS.** It goes without saying that this belief, central as it is in most sub-Saharan African societies, has a direct consequence in the conceptualization of political power and of those who hold it. For one thing, if the invisible determines the visible, then who is powerful in the visible world must also be powerful in the invisible one, either directly or indirectly. Geschiere (1995) offers many examples of such an assumption at work, mostly from Cameroonian contexts, and furthers the discussion so as to show that such beliefs may have been deeply intertwined with the development of certain sociopolitical models. Put roughly, Geschiere (1995: 164–71) suggests that in societies organized politically as ‘acephalous’ groups—i.e. whose internal hierarchy is headed by family heads, not chiefs, as there are no social units acting corporately beyond the level of kin-based groups—those individuals who had some degree of agency in the invisible were for the most part living outside of the society and their services, often as healers, could be requested in exchange for some sort of payment. In centralized societies, by contrast, where the top position in the social organization is occupied by the chief, possession and management of spiritual powers were the prerogative of the village chief, in addition to other figures of political and ritual influence, if present.

How do Lower Fungom societies pattern within this framework? At this point, it is necessary that I briefly deal with two key concepts in the ethnography of Lower Fungom societies: the local conception of the village and of the village chief. In §4.3.4 I will show how this ethnographic data can shed new light on the Lower Fungom language ideology.

**4.3.3 VILLAGE AND CHIEF IN THE LOWER FUNGOM SOCIETIES.** As I have shown in Di Carlo (2011), the basic ‘building block’ of the Lower Fungom societies is the kin-based ‘quarter’, not the village itself. Quarters are residential and exogamous units in a virilocal system, that is, a system in which all the male members of a given quarter as a rule (i) have to marry women coming from outside of their quarter and not consanguineous to their own mothers, and (ii) are the exclusive residents, together with their wives and children, of a spatially delimited area included in the village. Furthermore, quarters are corporate groups in terms of economy (i.e. members of the same quarter typically collaborate during farming and market activities) and, importantly, they enjoy a certain degree of political autonomy within the village context.

Ritual, on the contrary, seems to be the principal, if not the only, dimension of life in these societies in which the village acts corporately (i.e. as a social unit). Suffice it to recall

here<sup>8</sup> that chiefs typically represent their power by saying that it is their exclusive duty to provide their fellow villagers with ‘chop, bush, pikin’—i.e. CPE for English ‘produce, game, offspring’—and that they are able to do so through ritual-magical means. Furthermore, as elsewhere in the Cameroonian Grassfields (cf. Fowler 1993, 2011; Warnier 2009), chiefs are conceptualized as sorts of ‘sacred kings’ whose spiritual powers must be given by village-based secret associations.<sup>9</sup> Both aspects indicate that one of the main *raisons d’être* of the village, i.e. of a supra-kin group, is to be found in the localized management of ritual power (cf. Horton 1972).

So, turning back to the question in §4.3.2 that prompted this short digression, we can say that the Lower Fungom societies, due to their semi-centralized sociopolitical configuration pivoting around the chief’s supernatural agency and rooted in village-based secret associations, exemplify the second type in the framework proposed by Geschiere (see §4.3.2): the chief is the one who is credited with being able to secure prosperity for his subjects, thanks to his agency in the invisible world. Tautologically, one could also say that village members constitute the group of people who benefit from the village chief’s agency in the invisible world.

**4.3.4 LANGUAGE X = VILLAGE X = SECURITY PROVIDED BY THE CHIEF OF VILLAGE X?** At this point it must be recalled that the only other dimension where the village as a whole has a clear social significance besides ritual is *language*: as we have seen (§3.2.2) the local ideology prescribes the coincidence between ‘languages’ and chiefdoms, the latter nearly perfectly coinciding, in Lower Fungom, with single villages. As a result, in a context where social identity is fluid to a degree unknown to western societies, speaking in the language distinctive of a given chiefdom can legitimately be seen as the only symbolic means for representing, no matter how provisionally, one’s affiliation with that village community. Logically, this can be seen as the key way of representing (if subconsciously) oneself as being part of the group that can benefit from protection in the invisible world provided by its chief. In such a cultural universe, being multilingual could grant the potential of getting the spiritual protection from one or another chief, depending on the situation. Figure 2 offers a graphical summary of the chain of implications I have proposed in §4.

<sup>8</sup> A detailed treatment of this topic would require more space than is possible here: see Di Carlo (2011: 70ff.) for an overview of some sociopolitical features in the area and Horton (1972) for a general view on the importance of mainly ritual institutions in the emergence of so-called ‘stateless societies’.

<sup>9</sup> This is an essential aspect of social life throughout (at least) Central and West Africa, on which see Horton (1972) and, for the Grassfields, Kaberry (1962), Chilver and Kaberry (1968), and Fowler (1993, 2011). Di Carlo (2011: 65ff.) is the only source for Lower Fungom in this regard beyond some 1920–30s British colonial reports (cited therein).



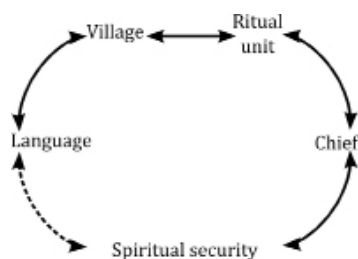


Figure 2. **a)**: the chain of implications, clockwise: Lower Fungom language ideology conceptualizes that each village speaks its own “language” (which, from the linguist’s standpoint may be a variety, not a separate language); the village behaves corporately (i.e. as a social unit) only in ritual matters; within the ritual sphere the village chief is the most prominent actor; since the chief is credited with powers that grant him agency in the spiritual world, he provides the community of his subjects with protection in the spiritual world—that is, spiritual security, a prerequisite for material well-being.

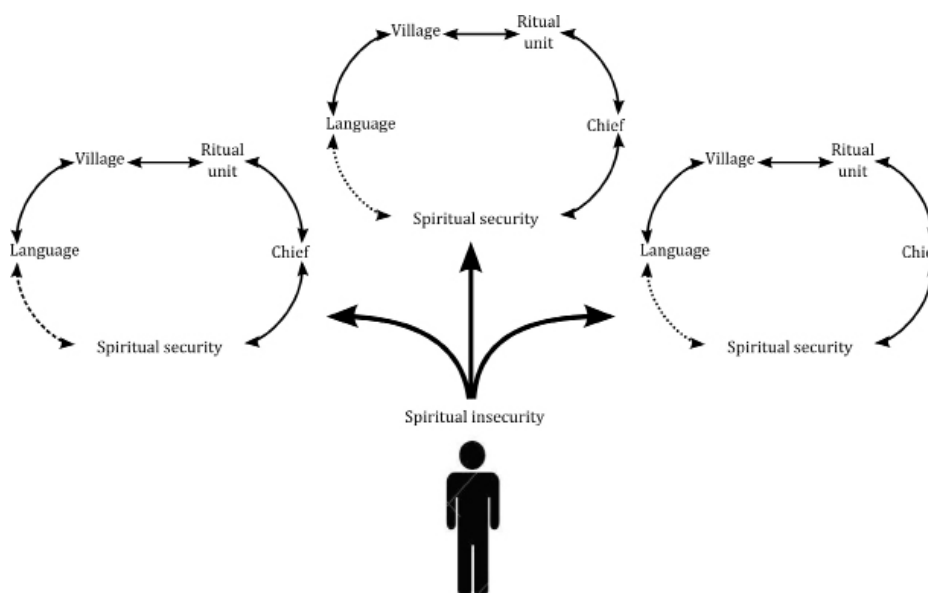


Figure 2. **b)**: through active competence in multiple languages an individual represents affiliation in multiple village communities. By joining different communities enjoying protection from different chiefs, he maximizes the chances to obtain spiritual protection and, hence, material well-being. It will become apparent that this logic is parallel to what in finance is usually called “diversification of investments”.

**4.4 SUMMARY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CASE STUDY.** To sum up what I have presented so far:<sup>10</sup>

1. upon assessing the vitality of Lower Fungom languages, we realized that these are immersed in a language ecology where (i) there is an extremely localist sociolinguistic stance (Hill 1996) (i.e. in local conceptions each village speaks a separate language) and (ii) individual multilingualism is very common;
2. thanks to anecdotal observations, we realized that intergenerational transmission of local languages is, on the whole, still relatively functional as opposed to the transmission of multilingual competence: multilingualism appears as an endangered practice;
3. multilingualism is a key element in the local language ecology and, in addressing issues of language maintenance (i.e. how come small languages are still spoken in a linguistically highly diverse area where multilingualism is so common?), we realized that it was necessary to gain more insights into the actual distribution of multilingual competence among the local population;
4. in order to do so, we interviewed 97 individuals using an ethnographically-informed questionnaire as a mnemonic and we found out that (i) high degrees of multilingualism are common, (ii) multilingualism in local vernaculars (i.e. traditional multilingualism) is not essentialist but indexical in nature as it is not prestige but, rather, affiliation and, thereby, social identities devoid of moral reflexes that are represented through language choice. Since the local language ideology associates each village with one separate ‘language’, we wondered what ‘being a villager of village X or Y’ means in local culture.
5. the village is a meaningful social unit only in its being a ritual unit, and ritual is headed by the village chief;
6. the chief is credited with supernatural powers that grant him agency in the invisible world of spirits: hence, the chief is the major person responsible for the material well-being of the village as, traditionally, it is believed that everything in the visible world is determined in the invisible;
7. being a member of village X means being under the spiritual protection of its chief;

<sup>10</sup> However intriguing, it must be kept in mind that, at the present stage of the research, what I have proposed so far needs additional research before it can be legitimately presented as a fact. My impression, however, is that there are too many clues going in the same direction for one to state that this is totally wrong. For one thing, the actual level of multilingual competence needs to be properly assessed although, one must add, it will be important not only to assess people’s multilingual competence through linguistic means (i.e. comparing performances with those by ‘native’ speakers) but also *in which way ‘native’ speakers assess his competence* (‘native’ is in scare quotes due to the fact that individuals’ linguistic repertoires are so complex that usual categories lose their meaning, cf. Lüpke 2010b: 1). A number of anecdotal observations, for instance, seem to point to a high degree of ‘tolerance’ in this regard: in my experience, even if the person who claims to be speaking language X is evidently not as fluent as he thinks he is, speakers of language X tend to have a ‘mild’ attitude towards him. It is highly likely that what they are more concerned about is not judging abstract ‘grammaticality’, as it is in our cultures, but showing respect for the person’s will to be recognized as a would-be member of group X.

8. by symbolizing affiliation to different villages through speaking their ‘languages’ one obtains potential sources of protection from their chiefs, to be activated when the need arises.

This chain of implications leads us to a ‘thicker’ understanding of both the single components of the Lower Fungom language ecology (i.e. indexical multilingualism, localist sociolinguistic stance, the different local lects, etc.) and, importantly, *how they are connected to each other and what the possible motivations could be for people to make choices within this web of correlations*. Documenting language ecology, that is, enables one to discern the possible motivations people have in choosing, e.g., one given language, one given genre, one given construction, or one given phonological variant in a particular context. I will come back to this point in §5.2 to further show how this can be of essential importance to the documentary as well as to the descriptive linguist.

One last aspect that I would like to stress here is that a better understanding of the Lower Fungom language ecology might even lead us to consider that the maintenance of local vernaculars is in some way also connected with the maintenance of individual multilingualism, which in its turn is rooted in the traditional *Weltanschauung* I have briefly outlined in the previous sections (I will return to this point in §5.3).

## 5. IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE DOCUMENTATION

**5.1 RECONCILING ANCESTRALIST AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL POSITIONS.** We all know that the nostalgic<sup>11</sup> ancestral code model has characterized the early phases of endangered languages research and still plays a major role in shaping the work of many documenters. The essentialist ELDP motto “Because every lost word is another lost world” is a perfect example in this sense: it assumes, in a neo-Whorfian fashion, that every language embodies a distinct conception of the tangible world, an assumption that Di Carlo & Good (2014) try to complement with at least one possible alternative based on documentary evidence.

The point I want to raise here is: can we really think we are documenting a world if we limit ourselves to documenting an arbitrary selection of what people say in their daily life? In the literature, like I did above (§2), the different approaches have been dealt with contrastively, as if the adoption of one would not admit the adoption of the other method. Of course, in the concrete unfolding of research activities, it is impossible for one and the same person to use the ‘ancestralist’ and the ‘phenomenological’ research perspective at the same time. However, I would like to stress here that it remains fully possible that the two models (i) are applied at different stages of one and the same documentation project, also recursively<sup>12</sup> or (ii) inform the research plans of different members of a team.

<sup>11</sup> I take this term from Woodbury (2011): “[...] documentation of the ancestral code, like the endangerment construct itself, can be termed, without any intention to disparage [...], as NOSTALGIC, in the sense that it selects as important from among all the speech in a community that speech which gives evidence of a feature of the past which may not persist long into the future, namely the ancestral code” (Woodbury 2011: 178).

<sup>12</sup> This is reminiscent of Grinevald’s proposal to see an “eternal spiralling upwards through the elements of the classic Boasian trilogy—grammar, texts (now = documentary corpus), and dictionary—

In the case of the documentary projects on Lower Fungom, for instance, focusing on one of the codes present in a given community's repertoire or on an assumedly uniform ethnohistorical tradition have been a priority until the team as a whole obtained a clearer understanding of the local language ecologies and ideologies, which meant that some of us became progressively more focused on multilingualism and on issues of language maintenance. The adoption of such a selective approach, closer to the ancestral code approach rather than to the phenomenological extreme, has allowed the production of both monolectal (like Voll's (in prep.) descriptive grammar of Mundabli) and polylectal grammars (like Lovegren 2013). Far from being obstacles, these outcomes have provided irreplaceable tools for deepening research in other domains and identifying other research targets that could contribute to making our work closer to a holistic documentation. Without those more or less 'ancestralist', reductionist works it would have been too difficult to deal with complex issues such as the loci of reproduction of local languages and cultures (which, to date, have been identified and partially explored (see, e.g., Di Carlo & Good 2014 and Di Carlo in progress)). It must be kept in mind, moreover, that several of the Lower Fungom languages still lack a comprehensive description like those of Mungbam and Mundabli: the description of these languages, as opposed to their documentation, will be facilitated by the adoption, however temporary and self-conscious, of an ancestral code approach.

**5.2 FROM PHENOMENA TO PROCESSES.** If the previous proposal suggests that a holistic documentation can be achieved only by adopting both models, though at different stages, the one I present here wants to draw a firm boundary between the two and propose a further step in the methodology (let alone the epistemology) of documentary linguistics. As we have seen, at its core the ancestral code model is reductionist: it implies that the researcher makes arbitrary selections into the corpus to be included in the documentation so that it is 'purified' of everything that is not the target language. This facilitates description but warrants that the project outcome is not a 'real' documentation but, rather, the product of a process of co-creation of a language where both speakers (providers of data) and researcher (selector of data) play crucial roles in shaping the final outcome (see, e.g., Dobrin & Berson 2011: 194).

By contrast, taking a phenomenological approach means devoting more substantial attention to recording and analyzing the communicative practices observed in a given community. This increases the chances that one includes in the corpus also data that pertains to other languages, or to some forms of the target language that would be otherwise difficult to record unless they are captured in interaction. So, this is a step towards the inclusion of complexity in documentation.

Nonetheless, it is important to realize that, however different from each other in many respects, the two models both share one feature: their outcomes resemble what one could compare to a still image. The language being documented is captured at some point in time: it can be the selected, reintegrated 'pure' code in the 'ancestralist' approach or the multifaceted present in the phenomenological one (at its roots, the logic of this dichotomy parallels the innatist UG vs. coevolutionary model dichotomy discussed by Evans and Levinson

with each step forward producing advances and refinements in how the other steps proceed" (quote from Evans 2008: 348).

2009). In both cases we would be able to know what people are *saying*, but we would be still missing what people *mean* when they use a code in a given way or choose one among the codes present in their repertoires, since we crucially have no idea as to *why*, to which ends, they are making those choices.

The documentation (as opposed to the record) of the immanent communicative practices of a certain community aiming at being as faithful as possible cannot leave these questions unanswered. The point I wanted to exemplify with the case study I have offered here is that what I see as a promising way to achieve a holistic (i.e. real) documentation is to (i) take both approaches at different times (or by different team members) and for different purposes within one and the same documentary project and (ii) include ethnographic insights and tools in the documentation not as ancillary, complementary, interesting-but-too-complicated-to-include ‘things’ but, rather, as an integral and profoundly meaningful part of a language documentation project. This kind of research path naturally leads to a level of understanding that lies on an ontologically new ground, very similar to what Bourdieu (1977: 3, *passim*) proposes for the theory of practice as a way to integrate and at the same time overcome the dualism between objectivism (our ancestralist model) and phenomenology.

By getting closer to the real motivations for people to behave (if only linguistically) in a certain way, we are uncovering the social semiotic *processes*, that is, the cultural matrices underpinning local ways of speaking. This is likely to change how we see things in the field and, later, in our analysis. An example from my documentation can be helpful here.

During the recordings of a several-day-long welcome ritual in Ngun, I also had the opportunity to videotape some performances of *ishaama*, the highest women’s secret association in the village. What I knew already was that membership in this association grants a woman the highest level of social esteem possible—credited by the rest of the village as well as by all the surrounding villages and beyond thanks to a system of ‘cross-chiefdom equivalence’ of these titles (see Di Carlo 2011: 69, 76ff.)—which materializes, on the one hand, in access to especially sizable shares of food and drinks on certain occasions and, on the other, in the possibility of directly influencing the life of the village as well as of the whole area, thanks to collaboration with analogous women’s associations throughout the area. In the past I had witnessed the performances of some equivalent women’s associations in other villages of Lower Fungom: the chiefs were members and had always participated in the performance. This had left with me the impression that chiefs in some way ‘ruled’ these associations, thus confirming what men usually said during interviews about these associations. In Ngun I was exposed to a totally different situation: first of all, the chief participated in the initial, preparatory phases of the ritual dance but then chose to remain seated on his chair throughout the actual performance; secondly, during the performance of the several songs and dances, each lady sang in her father’s language, i.e. most often in a lect or language that was not Ngun.<sup>13</sup>

I first thought that this was a way for the women to sanction their autonomy in the vil-

<sup>13</sup> As a consequence of the exogamy rules recalled in §4.3.3, it is common to find in every Lower Fungom village a number of women who were born in other villages and have moved in after marriage with a local man. In Ngun, for instance, out of the 23 wives I have counted in a detailed village census, 16 came from other nearby villages.

lage: most Ngun villagers always hear them speaking Ngun, which is their way of representing themselves as ‘Ngun women’. Although this is surely achieved via this language choice, it might not be the whole story. Following what I have proposed in §4.3.4, an important addition can be made: they could be representing their autonomy by reminding the chief that they will always be ‘daughters of another village’, that is, members of another community of speakers and beneficiaries of the spiritual skills of another chief. From this perspective, the women’s choice to switch to their father’s language during a culturally highly salient event would appear more as a way of publicly downsizing and relativizing the Ngun chief’s actual power rather than as a symbol of the women’s autonomy *tout court* (relevant discussion of this and related aspects in Jukun areas, in a border region of Nigeria not far from Lower Fungom, can be found in Lüpke & Storch 2013: esp. 157ff.). To put it differently: some women, thanks to the degree of agency they have obtained in the society, materialize the popular view that the powers of the chief are limited, that he is potentially faulty like any other villager, that he can be wrong. These are reminiscent of the numerous little events in daily life during which villagers manifest their mocking and vaguely dissident-like attitude towards ‘big men’ through gossiping or secretly ridiculing their deeds. I would like to stress that these emergences of a political anti-hegemonic, profoundly egalitarian discourse, though permeating the Lower Fungom societies (and many others as illustrated, e.g., by Geschiere 1995: 93–120), are usually very difficult to document.

Why is this important? First, this alternative reading of the language choices during the *ishaama* performance would allow a re-appraisal of the event’s key (in the sense of Hymes’ (1986) SPEAKING mnemonic) from ‘exhibited self-determinism’ to ‘mocking iconoclasm’ or to a mixture of the two. This possible difference might prove to be of relevance to the linguist as the availability of alternative keys providing “the tone, manner, or spirit in which an act is done” (Hymes 1986: 62) may offer handholds for a better translation and overall linguistic annotation of verbal art performances. Those who have worked on these kinds of texts know how crucial such a possibility can be as it is common that verbal art genres are characterized by elliptical or otherwise ‘complicated’ constructions that are usually little understood in detail.

Second, it is a matter of doing ‘thick’ documentation: for one thing, local ‘distributions’ of agency, too, should be documented as they determine what can be said or done and in which way (e.g. using which discourse genres) by different people occupying different social positions.

Third, it can serve to avoid the risk of hypostatizing fluid or otherwise multifaceted institutions, a risk well-known to anthropologists (see, e.g., Bourdieu’s (1977) critiques to objectivism). That is, it mitigates the risk that an outsider, by way of recording practices ignoring the fact that they are carried out by *certain* individuals, in *given* moments, within *culturally-situated* contexts and for *specific* ends, “unduly magnifies the claim of a statement to general validity” (Fabian 1983: 80). This is clearly a less than ideal outcome in any documentary context. In Lower Fungom languages, chiefs are referred to by the non-specific term *ŋkuŋ* ‘head of a group of people (e.g. farmers, builders, dancers)’, while in the fully centralized chiefdoms of the Cameroonian Grassfields the chief is called *fon*. *Fons* are at the center of a much more elaborated etiquette and are socially more distant from the rest of the society than Lower Fungom *ŋkuŋ* (see, e.g., Warnier 1975 on Mankon, Chilver & Kaberry 1962 and Neba 2013 on Bafut; for the differences between Lower Fungom and



Grassfields chiefs see Di Carlo 2011: 65–89). Failing to grasp this difference could lead the documentary linguist to reify, unknowingly, a rigidly hierarchical institution (especially in recordings made in ritual contexts) whereas, in fact, it is not. It would not only be an ethnographic mistake but also a crucial misunderstanding that, once archived and published (also through publicly available videos), could be diffused back to the village so potentially becoming (i) a cause for the group being documented to become more conformant to a set of practices sanctioned in the (locally highly-prized) documenter's misinformed work and (ii) a potential source of legitimation for a chief's power hunger.

At this point it is important to recall that I arrived at this point *only because I paid attention to multilingualism*: a project led only through the lens of the ancestral code model could not possibly discover this since it would de-select multilingual evidence. I do not know whether the reader has realized that, since I started my discussion of Lower Fungom language ideology, we have passed a threshold, that which lies between phenomena on the one side and processes on the other. I have tried to talk about multilingualism not as a sociolinguistic phenomenon to be studied quantitatively or qualitatively or both. By directing my efforts to understanding the motivations for people to become multilingual, I have tried not to abstract multilingualism from its embeddedness in society and interaction. As we have seen, this can mean quite long a journey in another culture, the goal being parallel to Fredrik Barth's in Bali, i.e. "to build progressively a *more workable facsimile* of the realities [the Balinese] variously construct and inhabit" (1993: 93, emphasis mine). I find "progressively more workable facsimile" to be a very nice definition of the objective of language documentation as I intend it, surely one that cannot be achieved unless we manage, in some way, to integrate documentation of phenomena with documentation of the processes that give rise to them.

The importance of all this becomes even more evident if we recall that the development of language policies promoting revitalization or support should be drawn from the outcomes of a documentation project.

**5.3 LANGUAGE SUPPORT AND REVITALIZATION POLICIES.** Nobody would object to the claim that a radical change in the environment or the culture of a given community might threaten the maintenance of its lexico-grammatical code. To give but an example, ethnobotany, ethnozoology, and any other culture- and environment-specific components of ethnoscientific knowledge can be documented only in the field because it is here that the environment provides the referents that are encoded. However, if we agree on the fact that lexico-grammatical codes convey social as much as referential meanings, then it follows that maintenance of a given code is tied with the maintenance not only of environmental and broadly 'cultural' (i.e. 'folkloristic' in the understanding of many) realities, but also of social ones.

For this reason, most publications on language revitalization are careful to emphasize the importance of knowing local language ideologies in designing language policies. However, as I said above, when we talk about language ideologies we are talking about the processes, the matrices determining certain linguistic behaviors, something ontologically different from, say, the phonology or the lexicon of a given language, which are to be considered as the ultimate products, i.e. the emergent phenomena, of a complex web of cognitive, historical and cultural factors. To make this difference clear I would like to recall that there are cases, such as that in Kulick (1992), showing that maintenance of a tradi-

tional language ideology can coincide with the death of a language. The documentation of language ideologies and ecologies can lead to what a documentary linguist would define as counterintuitive results.

Equally telling as to how ideology and language lie on two different planes, is to note that maintenance of a given code can coincide with the permanence of a condition of social injustice. Should we discover that maintenance of a given language is instrumental in the continuation of social inequalities in a given community, would we struggle for its support or revitalization? Its death would disappoint the nostalgic westerners. These very people, I guess, would be equally disappointed to learn that corrupt and careless 'politicians' keep their power since the key institutions sanctioning their power have been preserved thanks to the outcomes of a nostalgic discourse over the maintenance of the local ancestral language.

In sum, my claim is: before embarking on a language support initiative (especially in Africa), one should first know what kind of sociocultural implications the use of a certain lexico-grammatical code has had in the past of a speaker community so as to be able to assess the consequences its maintenance would engender in the future. In the specific case of Lower Fungom, the essential role that multilingualism plays in the local language ecology that I have illustrated in this paper might 'counterintuitively' suggest that support of individual languages could be best pursued by fostering the development, in young people, of individual multilingual competence in the local vernaculars. This is a possibility I am exploring in the NSF-funded project I am currently involved in (PI Jeff Good).

**6. CONCLUSIONS.** In its essence this paper claims that doing language documentation means documenting not only the codes but also their ecologies and that this, in its turn, means also documenting the practices and the beliefs ensuring the reproduction of the phenomena we are exposed to in the field: phenomena such as sets of phonological variants, discourse genres, registers and language choices (to name but few) are all immersed in the open-ended universe of a group's language ideology, in its turn contained within its language ecology. It is at this level that linguistic behaviors get their significance, at least in the mind of the speakers. My claim is that a documentation project should at least try and explore these topics.

But, as Evans (2008) has rightly pointed out and Jeff Good (p.c.) has emphasized, here lies the risk that claims such as mine are taken as further 'need to be's' or 'need to do's' by the documentary linguist who, feeling overtaxed, would get lost in translating general recommendations into practical suggestions. Therefore, in these conclusions I will try to list what I hope the documentary linguist would consider doing after reading this paper (already an ambitious task *per se*).

1. Focus upon language ideology. In the available literature it is not made clear how one should target language ideology in the field and deal with it as an archivable documentary outcome. Points 2 and 3 below, respectively, tackle these aspects.
2. Carry out sociolinguistic surveys. If designed to this end (see 3.2.1 and Appendix A), a survey can be a shortcut in uncovering features of the local language ideology. At the very least, this will help you get acquainted with more people than you would do for the purposes of writing a grammar or a dictionary. By so doing, you

- will (i) have the opportunity to show the community at large that you are not totally ‘*encliqué*’<sup>14</sup> with the families you most often work with (including that you will distribute some of your money to people who would not otherwise receive it) and (ii) be exposed to a diverse array of statements or suggestions about the local language ideology especially from people who have not been too influenced through prolonged contact with you. In general, it is good to be reminded that exposure to diversity means exposure to potentially new discoveries in any domains.
3. Include introductory texts and ethnographic reference tools in your archived documentation. In my case, for instance, how can I make sure that anyone accessing my documentary materials stored in ELAR be informed about the language ideology and its cultural context as I have discussed in this paper? I think that an introductory sketch stored in the same file bundle would probably be of help. Moreover, it would be important to also prepare, as standalone documentary outcomes, (i) a census of the community members (if these are not too many) and (ii) a reference tool to map the existing relations between the people recorded in your audiovisual primary data: this can be generated after proper ethnographic data are collected and then organized using an application such as KinOath (URL <http://tla.mpi.nl/tools/tla-tools/kinoath/>).
  4. Form a multidisciplinary team. Dobrin (2008: 317) recommends that “[l]inguists preparing for fieldwork should read the contemporary ethnographic literature on the broader region in which they plan to work”. This will surely be of help but, I am afraid, will not be sufficient for a language documentation project of the kind I am advocating here to be successful. Ethnographic literature is commonly felt to be easier reading than linguistics works filled with field-specific (and, at times, also author-specific) technical terminology. Of course, the more superficially one can read something and have a sense of following the argument, the more likely this person will indulge in as superficial a reading as possible. And, it should not be overlooked that in order for one to make sense of the description of, say, a ritual performance, one should have a number of expectations in mind concerning, e.g., the role of participants (e.g. who can sing what songs? where does the singer live?) or the objects being used (e.g. where are the ritual objects usually stored?) as these could all provide interpretive cues. These kinds of questions are more likely to rise after one either has some previous fieldwork experience or has also studied a number of general anthropological or philosophical works or both. Let us reverse this: paraphrasing Dobrin (2008), would you recommend that “Ethnographers preparing for fieldwork should read the contemporary linguistic literature on the languages spoken in the broader region in which they plan to work”? Sure you would. But if in the target languages there are, say, tones, wouldn’t you also recommend reading some general works on tones? In order for you to be sure that the ethnographer will be able to do a proper transcription, then,

<sup>14</sup> The notion I am referring to here is Olivier de Sardan’s (1995) *enclique*: “The researcher enters a society through some of its particular groups, not with the participation of the whole community. He enters some networks and not others. This bias is as daunting as it is unavoidable. The researcher can always be assimilated, often unwillingly but at times with his complicity, to a ‘clique’ or a local ‘faction’.” (Olivier de Sardan 1995: §81, my translation).

you should also check that he is familiar with the basics of the IPA. But, can you expect the ethnographer also to become a linguist? Imagine one has access to unlimited funding, wouldn't it be far better to have the ethnographer be accompanied by a linguist (ideally after training them in the art of listening and cooperating)? Sure it would. *The fact that, as we all know, funding is very limited (if there is any), should not make us forget what the best practice we should aim at is.*

As the reader will realize, the last point is the most important as it is likely to transform all the imperatives of the previous points from 'do this' or 'be this' to 'have an ethnographer do this'. I am hoping that, with these practical directions, this paper has contributed to having the overtaxed linguist not only better grasp what I meant in my paper, but also make novel plans for future research.

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**APPENDIX**  
**MULTILINGUALISM PROJECT – QUESTIONNAIRE**

Researcher		
Date		
Audio files		
Village		
Quarter		
<b>Personal details</b>	Paternal name	
	Maternal name	
	Other names	
	Gender	
	Date of birth	
	Occupation	
	Paternal affiliation(s)	<i>Quarter of birth, mother's quarter, grand-mothers' affiliations, other affiliations (e.g. child fostering)</i>
	Maternal affiliation(s)	<i>See above</i>
	Spouse(s)' provenance	
	Spouse(s)' languages	
	Parents' provenance	<i>Quarter of birth. At times focus on this detail gives information which complements that in "paternal affiliation"</i>
	Parents' languages	<i>Languages spoken by the respondent's parents. Here it is the local ideology to be applied (i.e. lects, not languages)</i>

**Known languages**

Date..... Village.....

Consultant's paternal name.....

Language name	Degree of competence 1= hears a bit; 2= hears but no talk; 3= talks a bit; 4= fluent ; 5= native

**Language sheet /Village..... Consultant's paternal name.....**

Language name	
How did you learn it and where?	
When do you use it?	
Are there any special occasions in which you use it? (e.g. prayers, songs, invocations, formulas)	

Language name	
How did you learn it and where?	
When do you use it?	
Are there any special occasions in which you use it? (e.g. prayers, songs, invocations, formulas)	

Language name	
How did you learn it and where?	
When do you use it?	
Are there any special occasions in which you use it? (e.g. prayers, songs, invocations, formulas)	

Pierpaolo DiCarlo  
 pierpaolodicarlo@gmail.com

## Linguistic variation and the dynamics of language documentation: Editing in ‘pure’ Kagulu<sup>1</sup>

Lutz Marten (*SOAS, University of London*)  
 and Malin Petzell (*University of Gothenburg*)

The Tanzanian ethnic community language Kagulu is in extended language contact with the national language Swahili and other neighbouring community languages. The effects of contact are seen in vocabulary and structure, leading to a high degree of linguistic variation and to the development of distinct varieties of ‘pure’ and ‘mixed’ Kagulu. A comprehensive documentation of the language needs to take this variation into account and to provide a description of the different varieties and their interaction. The paper illustrates this point by charting the development of a specific text within a language documentation project. A comparison of three versions of the text – a recorded oral story, a transcribed version of it and a further, edited version in which features of pure Kagulu are edited in – shows the dynamics of how the different versions of the text interact and provides a detailed picture of linguistic variation and of speakers’ use and exploitation of it. We show that all versions of the text are valid, ‘authentic’ representations of their own linguistic reality, and how all three of them, and the processes of their genesis, are an integral part of a comprehensive documentation of Kagulu and its linguistic ecology.

**1. INTRODUCTION.** Language contact is an important aspect of and a precondition for language shift and language endangerment, therefore language documentation must take heed of language contact, its effects on language structure, and the sociolinguistic spaces that language contact provides (cf. Childs et al. 2013). More generally, language documentation aims to provide a comprehensive account of variation encountered in the language, and of different linguistic forms associated with different contexts of language use (e.g. Himmelman 1998, 2006).

Language contact situations and linguistic variation exist independently of language description, documentation or revitalization efforts. However, linguistic variation can acquire a particular dynamic in language documentation contexts. In this paper we will present a detailed example of this from the multilingual context of Tanzania, showing the emergence and interaction of different language forms in different situations. The discussion is based on a specific example from the Tanzanian ethnic community language Kagulu (G12, 336,749 speakers).<sup>2</sup> It charts the development and editorial processes in the

<sup>1</sup> Earlier versions of this paper have been presented at the 2013 ELDP Africa Day, SOAS, at the 2013 annual meeting of the BAAL Language in Africa SIG, Edge Hill University, at the Centre for Multilingualism and Diversities Research (CMDR) of the University of the Western Cape and at the 2014 Languages of Tanzania project workshop, University of Dar es Salaam. We are grateful to audiences at these events, as well as to Mary Chambers, Nancy Kula and two anonymous reviewers for helpful comments and suggestions.

<sup>2</sup> The classification of the languages discussed in the article follows Maho’s (2003) update of Guthrie (1967–71); speaker numbers are from MLT (2009).

genesis of a particular Kagulu text in the context of a language documentation project. By comparing three versions of the text – a recording of an oral version, a transcribed version of the recording, and an edited version of the transcription – we show the dynamics of language variation and speaker agency and trace the construction of a ‘pure’ Kagulu text (cf. Mosel 2008, 2012, Woodbury 2005, 2011). The example shows how through the agency of members of the documentation team, different language use and language ideologies take effect and the nature of the text is transformed from the initial recording of an oral story into a written and edited version of the text. In the process, the text is ‘purified’ in that perceived effects of language contact with Swahili are replaced by forms seen as being more ‘authentic’ Kagulu. In addition, variant forms are standardized, and the genre of the text as a story is reinforced through the introduction of genre-specific forms.

We will propose that all versions of the story are representations of authentic Kagulu and that it is precisely the dynamics of the development of the different versions, and the interaction of language contact, standardization, spoken vs. written text creations, and speaker agency (particularly, in this case, within a language documentation project) which provides the context in which to interpret and understand the particular language ecology and language dynamics of Kagulu. Both the texts themselves and the contexts of their production thus provide essential evidence for language documentation.

**2. BACKGROUND.** Tanzania is home to a complex linguistic situation, involving between 120 and 150 languages belonging to four different linguistic phyla (e.g. Kahigi et al. 2000, Lewis et al. 2014, Maho & Sands 2002, MLT 2009). The largest language, in terms of first language speakers, is Sukuma, with just over five million speakers, but speaker numbers of most languages are in the hundred thousands rather than millions.

The most dominant language of the Tanzanian linguistic situation is Swahili. Originally spoken along the East African coast from southern Somalia to northern Mozambique, in modern times Swahili has become the main East African lingua franca, with high numbers of speakers in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique. The role of Swahili as a lingua franca goes back to the 19th century, and the language has been strongly promoted as the national language of Tanzania since the foundation of the republic in 1964 (Mbaabu 1985, Whiteley 1969). It is now established as the almost universal lingua franca of the country and functions as the main or only language of public discourse, the media, education, commerce and government. Through widespread use and its prevalent role in education for the last four decades, knowledge of Swahili in Tanzania, often as a second language, has become near-universal. The majority of Swahili speakers are bi- or multilingual in Swahili and in an ethnic community language, which has typically been their home or first language. This is changing, however, especially in urban contexts, where Swahili has often become a first language of younger speakers.

Tanzania’s ethnic community languages are largely marginalized and sometimes actively suppressed (Muzale & Rugemalira 2008). They have no designated roles in public life and are mostly confined to home use. They are not used in education, in the media or in other public domains, and their use in the classroom or at political rallies is discouraged. Few have an agreed orthography or a written corpus, and only recently have there been efforts to map and document ethnic community languages (e.g. Legère 2002, MLT 2009).

The overall language situation is characterized by a high degree of multilingualism, typi-



cally involving Swahili and one or more community languages, and by language shift and loss, typically away from an ethnic community language to Swahili (Batibo 1992, Kiango 2013, Legère 1992, Mekacha 1993, Petzell 2012a, Yoneda 1996). Of the 126 Tanzanian languages listed in Lewis et al. (2014), 40 are classified as being ‘in trouble’, and eight as ‘dying’, and there are many documented cases of the effects of language contact and the influence of Swahili on ethnic community languages. As in many other African (and non-African) contexts, gradual language shift, rather than abrupt language loss or extinction, is the main process of language endangerment in Tanzania, and language shift typically involves an African lingua franca, in this case Swahili, rather than an ex-colonial language (e.g. Batibo 2005). In addition, and sometimes in parallel with language shift, many Tanzanian community languages show signs of language contact with Swahili. Aspects of the ‘Swahilization’ of Tanzanian community languages are found at all levels of linguistic structure – vocabulary, phonology, morphology and syntax. Often there is a difference in usage between generations, with older speakers speaking a more conservative variety.<sup>3</sup> Speakers are often aware of differences between what are seen as ‘pure’ or ‘deep’ versus ‘modern’ or ‘mixed’ varieties (e.g. Yoneda 2010; see also Slabbert & Finlayson 1998 for this distinction in a South African context).<sup>4</sup>

For example, Yoneda (2010) reports that contact effects in the south-western Tanzanian language Matengo (N13, about 270,000 speakers) are found in phonology, vocabulary and morphosyntax. Although Matengo has a seven-vowel system with a distinction between short and long vowels, younger speakers are shifting towards a five-vowel system without length distinctions, which corresponds to the vowel system of Swahili. In the lexicon, many loanwords are taken from Swahili, not only for new concepts, but also for meanings for which a synonymous Matengo word exists. Loanwords are not restricted to open class items, but also include function words such as prepositions, conjunctions and adverbs. On the grammatical level, Matengo has borrowed a passive construction from Swahili, replacing an impersonal construction (in effect, this change is a re-introduction of a historical construction which had been lost, since the Swahili passive marker is a reflex of a reconstructed Proto-Bantu form). Matengo speakers are well aware of these on-going changes and distinguish between *Samatengo sa ndani* (‘pure’ or ‘inside’ Matengo) which is considered as ‘real’ Matengo, and *Samatengo sa kisasa* (‘modern’ Matengo), which shows strong influence from Swahili (Yoneda 2010: 147).

In Digo (E73, 166,000 speakers), spoken in the coastal region along the Kenyan-Tanzanian border, Nicolle (2013: 413–417) notes influence from Swahili in vocabulary and grammar. There are several loanwords from Swahili, some of which have become part of the ‘core’ vocabulary, and are often used alongside older Digo words. Grammatical influence from Swahili can be seen in the use of demonstratives, where only older speakers make full use of the Digo system of four series of demonstratives (with different variant forms), a situation reflecting more closely the Proto-Bantu system as de-

<sup>3</sup> Or at least the difference is often reported as being related to age. Education, profession or place of residence (e.g. urban vs. rural) are likely to play a role as well, and there is an additional dimension of observed vs. actual language use. We will see in the Kagulu example below that the promotion of more conservative language forms is actually found among younger speakers.

<sup>4</sup> There are also inverse contact effects, where features from ethnic community languages (e.g. diminutive forms with class 12 *ka-*, habitual *-ag-*) are incorporated into colloquial varieties of Swahili (Marten 2013, Rugemalira 2010).

scribed by Meeussen (1967: 107), while younger speakers use fewer forms, resembling the three-way distinction of Swahili. Another area is in the use of noun class 11, which is changing in terms of variation of forms and plural assignment, possibly under influence from Swahili, where classes 11 and 14 have merged. However, while there are contact effects, Nicolle observes that there is no evidence of wholesale language shift from Digo to Swahili, even though the domains in which Digo is used are limited.

The neighbouring language Bondei (G24, 121,934 speakers) has likewise been in contact with Swahili for a long time, and shows signs of language contact in all areas of language structure, and particularly in the lexicon. Kiango (2013) notes that Bondei is used as the main means of communication only in a small number of villages, and typically by older speakers. In contrast, in most villages and all urban contexts, both Bondei and to a larger extent Swahili are used, and most younger speakers are more likely to use Swahili than Bondei. While younger speakers typically understand Bondei, when speaking they often mix Bondei with Swahili forms.

The examples of Matengo, Digo and Bondei are in many ways representative of the wider language situation in Tanzania. Tanzanian ethnic community languages are restricted in their domains of use, often show contact effects, mainly from contact with Swahili, and experience more or less language shift and language endangerment. Furthermore, the vast majority of Tanzanian languages remains underdocumented despite recent efforts in increased linguistic description. A problem for language documentation in this context is the representation of the different varieties along the poles of 'pure' and 'modern' varieties, and how to capture adequately the dynamics underlying the relevant contact situation. On the one hand, documentation aims at presenting the language's lexical and structural resources as extensively as possible, including forms and features of 'pure' varieties or 'ancestral code' (Woodbury 2005, 2011). On the other hand, documentation has to be faithful to actual language use and linguistic practices embedded in contemporary communicative ecologies, and to the heterogeneity and dynamics inherent in any language – thus taking account of 'modern' varieties as well (Himmelman 1998). The situation is complicated by the fact that speakers are often aware of differences between different varieties, and may consciously or unconsciously manipulate certain forms or codes rather than others on a given occasion – for example, in response to the presence of a researcher, or so as to present, or create, a more distinct and unique variety, strengthening a distinct linguistic identity, for example in the context of producing edited, written versions of spoken texts (Mosel 2008, 2012), as we will show below.

Approaches to this problem have already been seen in the short discussion above. The descriptions by Yoneda (2010), Nicolle (2013) and Kiango (2013) provide explicit statements about structural influences from Swahili on the structure of Matengo, Digo and Bondei, respectively. In addition, the authors comment on differences in use, in particular with respect to different generations, and on speakers' attitudes towards the different varieties. In Yoneda's case, this is backed up by interviews conducted with groups of younger and older speakers (2010: 146–7). The approach adopted by these authors is to provide explicit documentation of the variation and dynamics found in the contact situation, akin to the aims of 'sociolinguistic language documentation' developed by Childs et al. (2013).

In the following section, we consider another means of capturing the dynamics of language contact in a language documentation context, and that is the genesis of different variants of a Kagulu text – an original recording, a transcribed version, and an edited text – as

a record of editing in ‘pure’ Kagulu.

**3. DIFISI NA SUNGULA ‘THE HYENA AND THE RABBIT’: THE GENESIS OF A KAGULU TEXT.** In this section we present a detailed analysis of the genesis of an edited Kagulu text within a language documentation project. We will provide a brief background of the sociolinguistic situation of Kagulu and then present and compare the three versions of the text – the recording, the transcription and the edited text – in detail, showing how speaker agency, language attitudes and changes in mode from spoken to written result in the dynamic development of the text.

**3.1 KAGULU LANGUAGE BACKGROUND.** Kagulu (autonyms *Chikagulu* or *Chimegi*) is a Bantu language spoken in Tanzania’s Morogoro region, about 250 km from the coast and the country’s largest city Dar es Salaam, with some 336,749 speakers (MLT 2009; cf. Petzell 2008, 2012b). There are a number of anthropological works on the language, including Kagulu language materials (e.g. Beidelman 1967, 1971, 1997), two grammars (Last 1886, Petzell 2008) and a recent corpus resulting from documentation work by Malin Petzell, part of which is included in the Kagulu deposit at the Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR) at SOAS (<http://elar.soas.ac.uk/deposit/petzell2010kagulu>). Our entire Kagulu corpus consists of approximately 15 transcribed stories and conversations, numerous in-depth interviews and elicitation sessions, and months of participant observation in the field over a period of more than ten years. Our discussion here is based on this corpus.

Consonant with the foregoing discussion of ethnic community languages, Kagulu is restricted to a few domains of use, and its use is actively discouraged in schools and other public functions. There are high levels of Kagulu-Swahili bilingualism, and Swahili is used as the language of education, the media and politics. However, the language is being transmitted to children, and speakers have overall positive attitudes towards the language. The Kagulu-speaking area is surrounded by several other languages. Zigula (G31), Ngh’wele (G32), Zaramo (G33), Ngulu (G34), Luguru (G35) and Sagala (G39) are Bantu languages spoken to the east and southeast, while Gogo (G11) and Hehe (G62) are spoken to the west. The only neighbouring non-Bantu language is the Nilotic language Maasai, spoken to the north. Kagulu speakers are often conversant with neighbouring languages, some of which are mutually intelligible with Kagulu, and there is some contact-induced influence on Kagulu from neighbouring languages (Petzell 2008: 25–6).

As in other Tanzanian community languages, there are several signs of language contact with Swahili, and linguistic influence can be seen at the lexical and grammatical level. Like Matengo speakers, noted above, Kagulu speakers distinguish between ‘pure’ Kagulu (*Chimegi muhala* ‘only Kagulu’ or *Chimegi chenyecho* ‘Kagulu itself’) and ‘modern’ varieties, which are referred to as ‘mixed language’ (i.e. a mix with Swahili).

There are numerous Swahili loanwords, including lexical borrowing of nouns, verbs and adjectives (Petzell 2008: 80), as well as numerals and borrowed function words such as the complementizers *kwamba* and *yani* ‘that’ (2008: 187), and the question word *nani* ‘who’, which, in contrast to its Kagulu counterparts, is uninflected (2008: 177). In the noun class system, the assignment of class 14 plurals to class 10 is likely to be an innovation, and influenced by Swahili (2008: 62), while the reduced use of the augment (a vocalic ‘pre-prefix’ (PP) of the noun class prefix) by younger and urban speakers may reflect the Swahili sys-

tem, which does not have augments (2008: 67). In verbal morphology, there are alternations in the shape of the causative (-*is-* vs. -*ish-*) and passive (-*igw-* vs. -*w-*) markers, which are probably due to the introduction of the Swahili forms -*ish-* and -*w-* (2008: 119, 135). In comparative constructions, most speakers use *kuliko* ‘than’ (1a) in daily speech – a loan from Swahili – while the dated form *kusuma* ‘exceed’ (1b) (2008: 81) had to be elicited:<sup>5,6</sup>

- (1) a. i-biki    di-no    i-tali    kuliko    di-monga  
          5-tree   5-DEM   5-tall    than    5-other  
          ‘This tree (is) taller than the other one’
- b. m-gosi   m-kulu   ku-sum-a            i-mu-jelelo  
          1-man   1-big    15-exceed-FV    PP-1-young.man  
          ‘The man (is) bigger than the boy’

In copula constructions, there is an alternation between an older copula form *no*, which is associated predominantly with use by rural and/or older speakers and is found in historic (19th century) texts as well as modern ones, and a newer form *ni*, used by all speakers, which is not attested in older sources. Since it is the same form as the copula in Swahili, the *ni* form is probably due to contact. Despite a slight tendency for rural and/or older speakers to use the older form *no*, all in all the two copulas appear to be in free variation (2008: 162), and can even be used by the same speaker in the same phrase:

- (2) kasi            s-akwe            no            si-s-o            ni            ng’hefu  
      10.work   10-3SG.POSS   COP   10-10-REL   COP   10.few  
      ‘His/her works are those which are few’

The examples illustrate some of the structural influence Swahili has on Kagulu. In many cases, variation between two different forms can be associated with the speaker’s level of exposure to Swahili, which is usually higher among younger, urban, more educated speakers.

Kagulu speakers are often aware that they mix Kagulu with Swahili (and occasionally English) and may correct others as well as themselves. In the conversation between two speakers below, the speakers comment on their use of English and Swahili words and start correcting each other (laughingly) as they speak:

- (3) a. Goloko u-ku-changany-a.  
          friend   2SG-PRES-mix-FV  
          ‘My friend, you are mixing.’

<sup>5</sup> Glossing conventions follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules. In addition, the following abbreviations are used: 1, 2, 3 = noun class number, ACP = agreement class prefix, CONJ = conjunction, EXT = extension, FV = final vowel, INT = interrogative, INTERJ = interjection, PP = pre-prefix, N = noun, NCP = nominal class prefix, NUM = numeral, OM = object marker, PoS = part of speech, PRN = pronoun, REF = referential, S = sentence, SM = subject marker, TM = tense marker, V = verb.

<sup>6</sup> The adjective -*tali* ‘tall’ in (1a) looks like a loan from English, but this is a chance resemblance and it can be reconstructed as Proto-Bantu \**tadi*.

- b. Hambiya lugha si-etu si-no si-o-baho  
 now 10.language 10-2PL.POSS 10-DEM 10-REL-DEM
- si-ki-ingil-il-a.  
 10-REC-enter-APPL-FV  
 ‘Well, it is here our languages interconnect.’

In (3), *-changanya* ‘mix’ and *lugha* ‘language’ are loanwords from Swahili, the corresponding Kagulu forms being *-hasa* ‘mix’ and *nonga* ‘language’.

**3.2 DIFISI NA SUNGULA: ALL FIVE VERSIONS OF THE TEXT.** The interplay between the different forms of Kagulu – ‘pure’ Kagulu, associated with less influence from Swahili, and ‘mixed’ Kagulu, associated with stronger influence from Swahili – is particularly clear in the study of textual editing to which we now turn. The text we use to illustrate our point is a story called *Difisi na sungula* ‘The hyena and the rabbit’, which was recorded on 28 August 2003 by Malin Petzell in Tanzania. A sound file of the recording, as well as a transcribed (and edited) version of the story are available online as part of the ELAR Kagulu deposit, and a complete transcription, highlighting editorial changes, is provided in the Appendix. The text is broadly representative of our Kagulu data (cf. Petzell 2008, 2015).

The story was originally told by the narrator JM and recorded in Berega, a village in the centre of the Kagulu area. It was then transcribed by a Kagulu speaker (RM) in Dar es Salaam, and typed there by a typist. The transcriber RM made some comments on the text and suggested some corrections and additions, which we will discuss in more detail below. An edited version was then produced by a different Kagulu speaker (SL) in Morogoro, working from the typed version without access to the original recording. During the editing processes, a number of changes, replacements and additions were made. Finally a new transcription of the original recording was made in 2013 by the authors of the present paper in conjunction with Nancy C. Kula (LM, MP, NCK). As shown in Table 1, there are thus five versions of the text, although we will mainly be concerned with the original text (as represented by our own new transcription), the handwritten transcribed text, and the edited text.

TABLE 1. Summary of the five versions of the text

Text No	Text Name	Originator	Date	Comments
1	Original recording	JM	28 August 2003	The narrator JM is female, was born in 1943 in Berega village and was living there at the time of the recording. The recordings took place in the researcher’s rented house in the village.

2	Handwritten transcription	RM	September 2003	The transcriber RM is male and was born in 1969 in Berega village, but has lived and worked in Dar es Salaam. He was studying in the MA Linguistics programme at the University of Dar es Salaam at the time. RM added a number of annotations to the original text.
3	Typed transcription		September 2003	Other than the transferral from handwritten to typed format, this is identical to Text 2.
4	Edited version	SL	2004-2005	The editor is SL, born in 1970 in Chanjale near Nongwe (deep in the Kagulu area). He was living and studying in Morogoro town at the time. He was also a member of the review board assessing the Kagulu Bible translation. Numerous changes to the original text are edited in.
5	New transcription	LM, MP, NCK	19 May 2013	New transcription and the most faithful representation of the original recording (Text 1). In effect, we are treating this here as Text 1 and will use Text 1/5 to refer to this version.

**3.3 FROM TEXT 1/5 TO TEXT 2.** In the first transcription process from Text 1 to Text 2, the transcriber (RM) provided several annotations and suggestions for changes in vocabulary, phrasing and morphosyntax. These included the suggested standardized spelling of the Swahili form *halafu* ‘then’ instead of the variant forms *harafu*, *ha’afu* found in Text 1 (but in contrast to the later edited version, there is no suggestion of using the Kagulu form *kamei* ‘then’ instead of *halafu*), and the change from the colloquial Kagulu form *halika* ‘if’ to the standard form *ng’halika* ‘if’. The spelling <ng’h> represents a voiceless velar nasal, which is sometimes reduced to /h/ in contemporary spoken Kagulu. RM also suggested replacing the Swahili-influenced clause *usiku uja* ‘night comes’ with the Kagulu adverbial *nhechilo* ‘at night’. Additionally, he proposed changing the class for concord agreement for animals. In the original Text 1, agreement with animals is in class 1, otherwise mostly reserved for humans, as is the case in Swahili. In contrast, in Kagulu, agreement with the inherent noun class is used, and this is what RM suggests. Interestingly, class 1 concord was retained in the subsequently edited Text 4, possibly because the editor felt that in traditional Kagulu, nouns referring to animals may take the prefix of class 1 if the animal is personified and assigned human traits, like an animal in a fable (Petzell 2008: 48). Finally, the transcriber suggested the addition of the traditional Kagulu ending to the story, the closing formula *simo ihela* ‘the story is finished’ replacing the Swahili *hadithi imeisha* ‘the story is finished’. These suggested changes are summarized in Table 2.



TABLE 2. Suggested changes in the transcribed version Text 2

PoS	Form in original text (Text 1/5)	Meaning	Suggested form in transcribed text (Text 2)	Notes
Adv	<i>halafu, harafu, ha'afu</i>	'(and) then'	<i>halafu</i>	Use of standard spelling, cf. also Swahili <i>halafu</i>
Conj	<i>halika</i>	'if'	<i>ng'halika</i>	Use of the standard form
S/Adv	<i>usiku uja</i>	'night come'	<i>nhechilo</i> ('at night')	cf. Swahili <i>usiku ukaja</i> ('and night came')
ACP	e.g. <i>ku-m-gamba</i> (class 1 agreement)	'to tell it (i.e. hyena)'	<i>ku-di-gamba</i> (class 5 agreement)	Agreement with nouns denoting personified animals
S	<i>hadithi imeisha</i>	'the story has ended'	<i>simo ihela</i>	cf. Swahili <i>hadithi imeisha</i>

The changes proposed by RM include forms of different parts of speech and grammatical forms, such as adverbs, conjunctions, phrases, and agreement markers, and can be grouped into three broad categories: 1) the use of standard forms for both Swahili (*halafu*) and Kagulu (*ng'ahlika*) forms, 2) the use of Kagulu rather than Swahili morphosyntax in the agreement with nouns denoting personified animals, and the replacement of the Swahili form with the Kagulu adverbial phrase *nhechilo* 'at night', and 3) the use of the Kagulu closing formula for the story instead of the Swahili one. Similar examples, and an overall trend towards standardization and purification, can be seen in the next stage of the genesis of the text, discussed in the next section.

**3.4 FROM TEXT 1/5 AND TEXT 2 TO TEXT 4.** During the subsequent development of the text, Text 2 was typed, resulting in Text 3, without any further changes. Text 3 then fed into a further editing process by the editor SL, who had no access to the original recording. Briefed only to proofread the text, SL added a number of changes to the text, resulting in Text 4. Overall, these new editorial changes introduced forms which seem to be more 'proper' Kagulu, i.e. *Chikagulu muhala*, 'pure' or 'only' Kagulu. The editor's revisions and corrections often consist of replacing what were probably taken to be contact-induced forms with 'pure' Kagulu forms. In the extract from the text in (4) – the first sentence and opening of the story – we have included the transcription of the original, spoken version (Text 1/5) in line 1, alongside the edited, written version (Text 4) in line 2. Differences between the two versions are highlighted in bold and grey shading. The first two words, *baho katali*, for example, are part of the edited version, but not of the original spoken version:<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Lines 3 to 5 show the morphological structure of the edited version, morphological glosses and part of speech tagging. The full text of the story is provided in the Appendix.

(4) Opening of *Difisi na sungula*

		difisi	na	sungula
<b>Baho</b>	<b>katali</b>	difisi	na	sungula
baho	katali	di-fisi	na	sungula
DEM	long time ago	5-hyena	CONJ	9.hare
<i>prn</i>	<i>adv</i>	<i>ncp-n</i>	<i>conj</i>	<i>n</i>
hawowa	mbuya	<b>ha(l)afu</b>		
hawowa	mbuya	<b>kamei</b>		
ha-wa-uw-a	mbuya	kamei		
PST-2-be-FV	1a.friend	then		
<i>tm-sm-v-fv</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>adv</i>		
sungula	kamgamba,	“chigende	<b>safali.”</b>	
sungula	kamgamba,	“chigende	<b>nhambo.”</b>	
sungula	ka-m-gamb-a	chi-gend-e	N-tambo	
9.hare	1.PST-1-speak-FV	7-go-FV	9.journey	
<i>n</i>	<i>sm-om-v-fv</i>	<i>sm-v-fv</i>	<i>ncp-n</i>	

‘A long time ago, the hyena and rabbit were friends, then rabbit told the hyena “let us have a journey.”’

The extract shows three differences between the two versions. As noted above, the opening formula *baho katali* ‘a long time ago’ was not part of the original spoken version. The second difference is the use of the adverb *kamei* ‘then’ in Text 4, instead of *halafu* ‘then’ in the original spoken version Text 1/5, the latter being a Swahili form. The third difference is the substitution of the noun *nhambo* ‘journey’ for *safali* ‘journey’, which is from Swahili *safari* ‘journey’. The /r/ in the Swahili form *safari* is substituted by /l/ in *safali*, which is a frequent and regular process of adaptation, since Kagulu, in contrast to Swahili, does not use /r/ at all. The last two examples – the substitution of *halafu* and *safali* – show that the editorial process involved a process of purification, or ‘de-Swahilization’ and changed the original text from a more ‘mixed’ to a more ‘pure’ Kagulu. The first difference in (4), the addition of the opening formula *baho katali*, is consistent with this observation, since the addition of the opening formula adds an idiomatic, ‘pure’ expression to the text and adds to its ‘authenticity’ as a ‘traditional’ Kagulu story.

The observations made in the light of the first sentence hold true, by and large, for the text overall. The differences between the original recording, Text 1/5, and the edited version, Text 4, are summarized in Table 3.

TABLE 3. Changes in the edited version Text 4

PoS	Form in original text (Text 1/5)	Meaning	Form in edited text (Text 4)	Notes
Adv	<i>halafu, harafu, ha'afu</i>	'(and) then'	<i>kamei</i>	cf. Swahili <i>halafu</i>
N	<i>safali</i>	'journey'	<i>nhambo</i>	cf. Swahili <i>safari</i>
Int	<i>nani</i>	'who'	<i>ye-hoki</i>	cf. Swahili <i>nani</i>
N	<i>mwenye nyumba</i>	'house owner'	<i>mwinya ikaya</i>	cf. Swahili <i>mwenye nyumba</i>
V	<i>wa-kalibish-igw-a</i>	'they were welcomed'	<i>wa-hokel-igw-a</i>	cf. Swahili <i>wa-li-karibish-w-a</i>
V	<i>ya-ku-m-tamil-a</i>	'he tells him'	<i>ho-yo-m-tamil-a</i>	Use of past tense prefix <i>ha-/ho-</i>
S	<i>hadithi imeisha</i>	'the story has ended'	<i>simo ihela</i>	cf. Swahili <i>hadithi imeisha</i>
Adv	[none]	'A long time ago'	<i>Baho katali</i>	Addition of opening formula
Prn/Num	<i>imonga</i>	'someone'	<i>imwedu/imwe</i>	Indefinite pronoun replaced by numeral 'one'
Conj	<i>kifwa</i>	'that'	<i>fina</i>	Replacement of conjunction

The examples show that several Swahili loanwords have been edited out. The variation in the form of the adverb *halafu, harafu, ha'afu* in the original recording shows degrees of loanword adaptation. In the edited text, all instances of the adverb are replaced by *kamei*. This has considerable influence on the text overall, as these forms are very frequent; there are 12 instances of *halafu* (and variants) in the original recording, out of 113 words in total; that is just over 10%. The replacement of *safali* by *nhambo* has been noted above, and the change of *nani* to *ye-hoki* follows a similar pattern, where the Swahili form is replaced by a more traditional Kagulu form. The form *mwenye nyumba*, from Swahili 'homeowner' (literally 'one having a/the house') is replaced by what looks like a calque translation with the same structure, *mwinya ikaya*. Other changes, with the effect of making the text more 'pure', are seen in the replacement of the (adapted) Swahili verb *kalibishigwa* (albeit with Kagulu concord) with the Kagulu *hokeligwa* (from the Kagulu verb *-hokela* 'receive'), and in *hoyomtamil-a*, where the verb form has been changed from present tense to past tense. The reason for this may be partly so as to use the past tense morpheme *ha-* (realized as *ho-* due to vowel assimilation), which is typical of Kagulu and is a feature not shared with neighbouring languages, including Swahili.

Other editorial changes are less frequent. One is the addition of the opening formula *baho katali*, discussed above, and of the Kagulu ending *simo ihela* instead of the Swahili

*hadithi imeisha*, already suggested in Text 2. Other examples include the replacement of the Kagulu indefinite pronoun *imonga* ‘someone’ (*dimonga* in class 5) with the numeral ‘one’ *imwedu* (or its short form *imwe*). This replacement does not seem to be clearly motivated, since the indefinite pronoun can be used as meaning ‘one’ or ‘the other one’. Neither of the forms are related to the corresponding Swahili forms *-o-ote* ‘anyone’ or *-moja* ‘one’. Similarly, in Text 4 the conjunction *kifwa* ‘that’ is replaced by the form *finā*. Neither form is related to a corresponding Swahili form, and the reason for the change remains unclear. It is possible that in both cases, the form in Text 1/5 was seen as inappropriate, possibly reflecting contact with a neighbouring language other than Swahili.

**3.5 DISCUSSION.** There are several factors to be taken into account when comparing the different versions of the text, including a change of mode from spoken to written language, the different roles adopted by the narrator, the transcriber and the editor, differences in their language attitudes, education and literacy ideologies, and the effects on the different intended audiences.

The original recording is of an oral, spoken text, while the transcription and the edited text are written. The change of mode from oral to written allows the transcriber and the editor to reflect on and change the language used, letting in the influence of different language attitudes and ideologies. A number of changes observed in the genesis of the Kagulu text are reminiscent of processes of text development, transcribing and editing observed by Mosel (2008, 2012) in the context of materials development for the teaching of endangered languages. Based on evidence from a documentation project of Teop in Papua New Guinea, and in particular of writing and editing Teop oral legends, Mosel identifies various types of changes, including purification and the replacement of loan words, elaboration through the addition of words, phrases and clauses, and increasing text coherence through different structural changes such as complexification or more explicit clause linkage. As shown above, very similar alterations are represented in the changes from Text 1/5 to Texts 2 and 4.

The change of mode from oral to written described here with reference to Kagulu is also relevant to the wider discussion of the representation of oral language, processes of transcription and the attendant transformation of the language used. Hinton (2011), for example, raises a number of issues related to writing and writing processes in language documentation and how these relate to oral language use. Ochs (1979) discusses how details of the representation of spoken language in written form reflect the cultural and theoretical assumptions of the transcriber, while Duranti (1997: 122-161) notes the relationship between writing and standardization, evident also in the case of the Kagulu texts. Geider (2003, esp. 137-146) comments on the process of text formation when writing Kanuri oral texts and identifies different stages of transition – from speech event, to recording, to the edited version of the text – sketching a similar process to the one described here. As these previous works note, writing is the most common process of reification of oral texts, but oral recording plays an important role in this process. Barber (2009: 4-5) notes how recordings of oral texts for broadcasting subtly transform the text into something else: “... conceptualized perhaps for the first time as a bounded entity that can be described, documented and exemplified ...” (2009: 4), and how through being recorded an oral text can assume different functions, such as the signalling of a tradition, claims to recognition, or affirmations of autonomy by a particular community. The effects of standardization, ‘purification’

and speaker ideologies in the text genesis of our Kagulu example described above are very consistent with these prior observations.

Since the process of transcription and editing is influenced by the speakers' perception of written Kagulu and their literacy ideologies, it also reflects differences in education and language attitudes, and the different roles of the narrator, transcriber and editor of the story. The story was narrated by an older woman without literacy training, while the editor was in his thirties and educated to university level. Both were brought up in the heartland of the Kagulu area with two Kagulu-speaking parents. Although the narrator lived in a Kagulu village, she worked in a Swahili-speaking setting, while the editor moved to Morogoro town, a non-Kagulu speaking area. The editor was married to another Kagulu speaker and spoke Kagulu at home on a daily basis. He was a Bible translator at the time, and likely to be more aware of Swahili influence and of efforts to preserve his language, and as a result more prone to using ancestral code and seeing Kagulu structures as more authentic. As a translator and member of the Kagulu Bible translation review board, the editor was versed in textual editing and translation, as well as a central participant in Kagulu language activism. His use of literary and pure Kagulu must be seen against this background. It is noteworthy that the more mixed, original text (Text 1) was produced by an older speaker, in her sixties at the time of recording, compared to the transcriber and editor who were in their thirties. The use of a 'purer' form of Kagulu, showing less influence from Swahili, is thus associated in this example with younger speakers, contrary to what has often been reported in other situations. The example shows that the question of language use and age is here embedded into the specific sociolinguistic background of the members of the documentation project – such as education and training, rural vs. urban residence, language attitudes and literacy ideologies, and their specific function in the project.

There are also differences of audience and an associated change in the communicative and pragmatic context. The recorded text was narrated to a very small audience present at the event, although it was also recorded, while the edited text was aimed at potential future audiences of a corpus of the language. Being part of a description project, both texts were also aimed in a more immediate sense at the researcher. In the case of the narration, the researcher was present, which may have affected the narrator, while the editor took the texts home and worked on his own, thus being able to reflect more deeply on the intended audiences and the appropriate language forms for them.

The comparative study of the different versions of the text presented here shows, on the one hand, speakers' awareness of features of 'mixed' and 'pure' Kagulu, in particular forms borrowed from Swahili. On the other hand, the study shows that for this particular text form – a story intended to be part of a descriptive corpus of the language – speakers (or at least the transcriber and the editor) felt that 'pure' Kagulu was more appropriate.

The example is of interest for language documentation in particular because it shows the dynamics of language contact and variation, and how speakers manipulate the different forms and codes available in contact situations. From the point of view of linguistic description, none of the three variants of the text (the original narration, the transcribed version and the edited text) is more valid than any other. The recorded version is probably a more faithful record of how the language is used, and as such is a more 'authentic' representation of contemporary linguistic practice. On the other hand, the edited version includes forms probably associated with a more reflective register, and is an example of what the editor

conceives as being a purer and in some sense more ‘authentic’ form of the language. It also includes lexical items such as *nhambo* ‘journey’ and *kamei* ‘then’, which, if restricted to such a ‘reflective’ register, would be lost if only the recorded text was available.

Investigating text genesis in detail, as we have done here, thus also raises questions about the status of existing documents in language documentation. For example, Hult and Wahlgren (2012) describe similar effects in the construction of classical Greek texts and note that only some versions survive for posterity and documentation. For Kagulu, a number of published texts exist in the form of transcribed oral stories (Beidelmann 1967, 1971, 1997 a.o.). Beidelman (1997: xv) notes the variation inherent in the texts, and how transcription needs to be faithful to variation, as “it may reflect speakers’ language competencies, indicate their ideas about their language and how it should be represented”. However, compared to our example (and similar recordings in the Kagulu ELAR corpus), virtually no instances of variation of the kind seen in our Text 1 are to be found in the stories in Beidelman (1967) (see Petzell 2015). This might be due to the fact that the texts were transcribed directly – without an audio recording – by Kagulu speakers who “were literate in their own language in addition to Swahili and some English” (1997: xv). As our discussion has shown, this transcription process is likely to have added its own dynamic, placing the texts in a particular context of written textual development – and so their linguistic interpretation will be helped by a more comprehensive understanding of this dynamic.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the process of editing itself, and the effects of the editing process, rather than the eventual product, are thus of central importance. What the process shows is the establishment of a version of the text which can be seen as a more traditional and conservative variety, aiming to preserve an ancestral code (Woodbury 2005, 2011). The addition of Kagulu opening and closing formulas (the closing formula *simo ihela* replacing the corresponding Swahili-influenced version *hadithi imeisha*) establishes the text more firmly as an authentic Kagulu story (cf. Mosel 2008, 2012). The replacement of the high-frequency adverb *halafu* with *kamei* has a strong effect on the text overall by significantly reducing the token frequency of Swahili-influenced forms. The overall effect of replacing ‘mixed’ Kagulu forms with ‘pure’ Kagulu forms is to make the text appear more distant from Swahili, thus representing a more distinct and unique variety. The result is a ‘purer’ version of Kagulu, but one which might in fact be a more homogeneous and more essentialized version of the language than is actually used, or has been used by speakers in the past.

In sum, the example shows the interdependence of the different versions of the text. One version without the others would present only part of the complex Kagulu situation, and would show only one linguistic reality at the expense of others. In contrast, by looking at different versions, and the contexts and processes of their production and perception, we can develop a better and richer understanding, not only of the Kagulu language, but also of the specific multilingual dynamics of language contact and linguistic variation in which its speakers are embedded.

**4. CONCLUSIONS.** In this paper we have presented an example of linguistic variation, language contact and the development of texts within the dynamics of language documentation. We have noted that many Tanzanian ethnic community languages show lexical and structural influence from Swahili, and that speakers often distinguish between ‘pure’ and



'mixed' varieties, differentiated by more or less influence from Swahili, and often associated with younger vs. older speakers.

In the case of Kagulu, we have shown that influences from Swahili are found at the lexical and grammatical level, and that in many cases, variant forms result from the adaptation of a Swahili form. However, while a list of variant forms provides a static picture of contact effects, it provides only limited information about the usage of different forms. Since language documentation aims to capture variation within a given language, as well as the way speakers interact with and use this variation, we have drawn attention to the dynamic aspects of language documentation by presenting a case study of three different versions of a Kagulu story – a recorded oral version, its transcription, and an edited subsequent version of it – and the dynamics between the three versions.

The comparison has shown the process of editing in 'pure' Kagulu, through the replacement of Swahili-influenced forms, the addition of forms which are felt to be more authentically Kagulu and the addition of forms that reinforce the genre of the text. This process is influenced by various factors, including a change of genre from spoken to written text, as well as by the complex sociolinguistic background of the speakers involved in the text genesis – the narrator, the transcriber and the editor – and the differences in their language use, educational background and professional training, age and residence, and language attitudes and literacy ideologies.

We have proposed that all versions of the text are valid in their own right, and that they are 'authentic' representations of different linguistic usage. Each text documents its own linguistic reality, and without any one version, our understanding of Kagulu would be poorer and more partial. Furthermore, a comparison of the texts, and the processes which led to their existence, provides a handle on the process of adjustment and editing which relates the versions to each other, thus producing a richer description of the language and of how speakers use and exploit patterns of variation for the construction of specific versions of the language. The example shows the interaction of linguistic variation, language contact and linguistic ideologies, and the relevance and importance of these dynamics for language description and documentation.

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## APPENDIX

'The hyena and the rabbit', recorded on 28 Aug 2003 by Malin Petzell; ELAR Kagulu deposit (<http://elar.soas.ac.uk/deposit/petzell2010kagulu>); original transcription mjs1.doc, sound file mjs1.waf; re-transcribed in May 2013 by Lutz Marten, Nancy C. Kula and Malin Petzell.

The text is presented in five lines:

- 1) Original recording (retranscribed) (Text 1/5)
- 2) Edited text (Text 4)
- 3) Morpheme-by-morpheme analysis
- 4) Morphological glosses
- 5) Parts of speech

Differences between lines 1 and 2 (i.e. between Text (1/5) and Text (4)) are highlighted by bold typeface and grey shading. A free, idiomatic translation is included after each sentence, and a translation of the whole story is provided before the text. Abbreviations follow the Leipzig glossing rules (<http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php>) and Croft (2003), with some additions that have no equivalence in the glossing rules.<sup>8</sup> The morpheme-by-morpheme analysis represents underlying forms which do not always correspond to the surface form in the text lines. For instance, the NCP of class 5, *di-*, is often realized as *i-*. The glosses in the gloss line are literal, while the free translation below each segment is idiomatic; the latter may, therefore, differ slightly from the glossing. Noun class membership (gender) is indicated after each noun, so that 'hare:9/10' denotes that the singular of hare is in class 9 and the plural in class 10.

## THE HYENA AND THE RABBIT

A long time ago, the hyena and the rabbit were friends. Then one day, the rabbit told the hyena, "Let's go on a journey." They arrived at a house and were welcomed. They stayed there for many days. One day the rabbit said to the owner of the house, "Tomorrow we are going back home, okay?" At night the rabbit ate all the peanuts, and afterwards he took some water into his mouth, swilled it around his mouth, and went to spit over the hyena. In the morning of the following day, the rabbit told their host, the owner of the house, "Check

<sup>8</sup> Abbreviations that are not in the Leipzig glossing rules: 1, 2, 3 = noun class number, ACP = agreement class prefix, CONJ = conjunction, EXT = extension, FV = final vowel, INT = interrogative, INTERJ = interjection, PP = pre-prefix, N = noun, NEUT = neuter, NCP = nominal class prefix, NUM = numeral, OM = object marker, PRN = pronoun, REF = referential, SM = subject marker, TM = tense marker, V = verb.

your belongings to see if they are okay.” So the owner of the house checked his belongings, and he found that his peanuts had been eaten. Then the rabbit told him, “Bring a chair, and let’s wash our mouths. Each of us shall gargle so we can see who stole and ate the nuts.” The rabbit himself went first, saying, “Give me the water so that I can go first and gargle.” Then he washed out his mouth, and spat clean water onto the chair. Next it was the hyena’s turn. He washed out his mouth and was found to be the one who had eaten. The hyena was killed. That is the end of the story.

### THE HYENA AND THE RABBIT

		difisi	na	sungula
<b>Baho</b>	<b>katali</b>	difisi	na	sungula
baho	katali	di-fisi	na	sungula
DEM	long time ago	5-hyena:5/6	CONJ	hare:9/10
<i>prn</i>	<i>adv</i>	<i>ncp-n</i>	<i>conj</i>	<i>n</i>
hawowa	mbuya	<b>ha(l)afu</b>		
hawowa	mbuya	<b>kamei</b>		
ha-wa-uw-a	mbuya	kamei		
PST-2-be-FV	friend:1a,9/2,10	then		
<i>tm-sm-v-fv</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>adv</i>		
sungula	kamgamba,	“chigende	<b>safali.”</b>	
sungula	kamgamba,	“chigende	<b>nhambo.”</b>	
sungula	ka-m-gamb -a	chi-gend-e	N-tambo	
hare:9/10	1.PST-1-speak-FV	7-go-FV	9/10-journey:9/10	
<i>n</i>	<i>sm-ncp-v-fv</i>	<i>sm-v-fv</i>	<i>ncp-n</i>	

A long time ago, the hyena and rabbit were friends, then rabbit told the hyena “Let us go on a journey.”

<b>Ha(l)afu</b>	howoluta	kunyumbangwa	<b>imonga,</b>
<b>Kamei</b>	howoluta	kunyumbangwa	<b>imwe,</b>
kamei	ha-wa-lut -a	ku-nyumba-ngwa	i-mwe
then	PST-2-go-FV	17-house:9/10-somebody’s	9-one
<i>adv</i>	<i>tm-sm-v-fv</i>	<i>ncp-n-prn</i>	<i>ncp-num</i>

**wakalibishigwa.**

**wahokeligwa.**

wa-hokel-igw-a

2-receive-PASS-FV

*sm-v-tm-fv*

Then they went to a house and they were welcomed.

<b>Ha(l)afu</b>	<b>wekala</b>	bahaya	majuwa	mengi
<b>Kamei</b>	<b>howekala</b>	bahaya	majuwa	mengi
kamei	ha-wa-ikal-a	ba-ha-ya	ma-jua	ma-ingi
then	PST-2-stay-FV	LOC-16-DEM	6-day:5/6	6-many
<i>adv</i>	<i>tm-sm-v-fv</i>	<i>acp-ncp-prn</i>	<i>ncp-n</i>	<i>ncp-quant</i>

They stayed there for many days.

**Ha(l)afu**

Ijuwa	<b>dimonga</b>	sungula	<b>kamgamba</b>
Ijuwa	<b>dimwedu</b>	sungula	<b>hoyomgamba</b>
di-jua	di-mwe(du)	sungula	ha-ya-o-m-gamb-a
5-day:5/6	5-one	hare:9/10	PST-1-REF-1-speak-FV
<i>ncp-n</i>	<i>ncp-num</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>tm-sm-ref-om-v-fv</i>

<b>mwinya</b>	<b>ikaya</b>	“aseye	nhosiku
mu-inya	i-kaya	“aseye	nhosiku
1-having	PP-village:9/10	a-seye	nhosiku
<i>ncp-prn</i>	<i>iv-n</i>	PP-1PL	tomorrow
		<i>iv-prn</i>	<i>n</i>



chikuluta	ukaya,	haya!”
chikuluta	ukaya,	haya!”
chi-ku-lut-a	u-kaya	heye
7-FUT-go-FV	14-home:14	ok
<i>sm-tm-v-fv</i>	<i>ncp-n</i>	<i>interj</i>

One day the rabbit said to the owner of the house “Tomorrow we are going back to our home, ok!”

**yakumtamila mwenye nyumba, halafu**

Nhechilo	sungula	(kadiya	mayowe)x2	gose,
Nhechilo	sungula	kadiya	mayowe	gose,
nhechilo	sungula	ka-diy-a	ma-yowe	ga-ose
at.night	hare:9/10	1.PST-eat-FV	6-peanut:5/6	6-all
<i>adv</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>sm-v-fv</i>	<i>ncp-n</i>	<i>acp-prn</i>

<b>harafu</b>	kalonda	meji,	kasugusa,
<b>kamei</b>	kalonda	meji,	kasugusa,
kamei	ka-lond-a	meji	ka-sugus-a
then	1.PST-take-FV	water:6	1.PST-gargle-FV
<i>adv</i>	<i>sm-v-fv</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>sm-v-fv</i>

keja	mutwila	difisi.
keja	mutwila	difisi.
ka-ij-a	m-tw-il-a	di-fisi
1.PST-come-FV	1-spit-APPL-FV	5-hyena:5/6
<i>sm-v-fv</i>	<i>om-v-ext-fv</i>	<i>ncp-n</i>

At night the rabbit ate all the peanuts, then he took water into his mouth, washed his mouth, and went to spit over the hyena.

<b>Harafu</b>	nhosikusiku	<b>usiku uja ha(r)afu</b>
<b>Kamei</b>	nhosikusiku	
kamei	nhosikusiku	
then	morning:9	
<i>adv</i>	<i>n</i>	

**yakumtamila**  
**hoyomtamila**

ha-ya-o-m-tamil-a  
PST-1-REF-1-explain-FV  
*tm-sm-ref-om-v-fv*

	<b>mwenye</b>	nyumba,
<b>imukaya</b>	<b>mwinya</b>	nyumba,
i-mu-kaya	mu-inya	nyumba
PP-18-house:9/10	3-having	house:9/10
<i>iv-ncp-n</i>	<i>ncp-prn</i>	<i>n</i>
“ulangise	finhu	fyako
“ulangise	finhu	fyako
u-langis-e	fi-nhu	fi-ako
2SG-search-FV	8-thing:7/8	8-2SG.POSS
<i>sm-v-fv</i>	<i>ncp-n</i>	<i>ncp-prn</i>
halika	fyose	fiswamu.”
halika	fyose	fiswamu.”
ng’halika	fi-ose	fi-swamu
if	8-all	8-good
<i>adv</i>	<i>acp-prn</i>	<i>ncp-adj</i>

In the morning of the following day, the rabbit told their host, the owner of the house,  
“Check your belongings to see if they are all right.”

<b>Ha(r)afu</b>	<b>mwenye</b>	<b>nyumba</b>	kalangisa
<b>Kamei</b>	<b>imwinya</b>	<b>kaya</b>	kalangisa
kamei	i-mu-inya	kaya	ka-langis-a
then	PP-1-having	house:9/10	1.PST-search-FV
<i>adv</i>	<i>iv-ncp-prn</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>sm-v-fv</i>

finhu	fyakwe,	kona	mayowe
finhu	fyakwe,	kona	mayowe
fi-nhu	fi-akwe	ka-on-a	ma-yowe
8-thing:7/8	8-3SG.POSS	1.PST-see-FV	6-peanut:5/6
<i>ncp-n</i>	<i>acp-prn</i>	<i>sm-v-fv</i>	<i>ncp-n</i>

gakwe	gadiigwa,	<b>harafu</b>	
gakwe	gadiigwa,	<b>kamei</b>	<b>sungula.</b>
ga-akwe	ga-diy-igw-a	kamei	sungula
6-3SG.POSS	6-eat-PASS-FV	then	hare:9/10
<i>acp-prn</i>	<i>sm-v-tm-fv</i>	<i>adv</i>	<i>n</i>

<b>aka</b>	<b>kamgamba,</b>	“lete	digoda
<b>kamgamba,</b>		“lete	digoda
	ka-m-gamb-a	let-e	di-goda
	1.PST-1-speak-FV	bring-FV	5-chair:5/6
	<i>sm-om-v-fv</i>	<i>v-fv</i>	<i>ncp-n</i>

chisuguse,	kila	munhu	yasuguse
chisuguse,	kila	munhu	yasuguse
chi-sugus-e	kila	mu-nhu	ya-sugus-e
1PL-gargle-FV	each	1-person:1/2	1-gargle-FV
<i>sm-v-fv</i>	<i>adj</i>	<i>ncp-n</i>	<i>sm-v-fv</i>

yoneke	yahijile	<b>au</b>	yadiile
yoneke	yahijile		yadiile
ya-on-ek-e	ya-hij-ile	au	ya-diy-ile
1-see-NEUT-FV	1-steal-PFV	or	1-eat-PFV
<i>sm-v-ext-fv</i>	<i>sm-v-tm</i>	<i>conj</i>	<i>sm-v-tm</i>

<b>nani</b>	no	yehoki”.
	no	ya-hoki
who	COP	1-INT
<i>prn</i>	<i>cop</i>	<i>acp-int</i>

Then the owner of the house checked his belongings, and he found that his peanuts were eaten, then rabbit told him, “Bring a chair so that we can wash out our mouths, each person will gargle so one can see who stole or who ate.”

“ning’heni	nikonge	niye	kusugusa	meji.”
“ning’heni	nikonge	niye	kusugusa	meji.”
ni-ing’h-e-ni	ni-kong-e	niye	ku-sugus-a	meji
1SG-give-FV-PL	1SG-start-FV	1SG	15-gargle-FV	water:6
<i>sm-v-fv-ext</i>	<i>sm-v-fv</i>	<i>prn</i>	<i>ncp-v-fv</i>	<i>n</i>

Then rabbit himself started, “Give me the water so that I can gargle first.”

<b>Ha(r)afu</b>	kasugusa	meji,	kotwila
<b>Kamei</b>	kasugusa	meji,	kotwila
Kamei	ka-sugus-a	meji	ka-tw-il-a
then	1.PST-gargle-FV	water:6	1.PST-spit-APPL-FV
<i>adv</i>	<i>sm-v-fv</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>sm-v-ext-fv</i>

mwigoda	meji	maswanu;	<b>ha(r)afu</b>	keja
mwigoda	meji	maswanu;	<b>kamei</b>	keja
mu-di-goda	meji	ma-swanu	kamei	ka-ij-a
18-5-chair:5/6	water:6	6-good	then	1.PST-come-FV
<i>ncp-ncp-n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>ncp-adj</i>	<i>adv</i>	<i>sm-v-fv</i>

difisi,	kasugusa	koneka
difisi,	kasugusa	koneka
di-fisi	ka-sugus-a	ku-onek-a
5-hyena:5/6	1.PST-gargle-FV	15-find out-FV
<i>ncp-n</i>	<i>sm-v-fv</i>	<i>ncp-v-fv</i>

kifwa	imwene	noyadiile.	
fina	imwene	noyadiile.	
fina	i-mu-ene	no	ya-diy-ile
that	PP-1-PRN	COP	1-eat-PFV
<i>conj</i>	<i>iv-ncp-prn</i>	<i>cop</i>	<i>sm-v-tm</i>

Then he washed out his mouth and spat clean water onto the chair; then the hyena came, washed out his mouth and was found to be the one who had eaten.

#### Hadithi imeisha.

Difisi	dikomigwa.		
Difisi	dikomigwa.	<b>Simo</b>	<b>ihela.</b>
di-fisi	di-kom-igw-a	simo	i-hel-a
5-hyena:5/6	5-kill-PASS-FV	story:9	9-finish-FV
<i>ncp-n</i>	<i>sm-v-tm-fv</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>sm-v-fv</i>

The hyena was killed. The story is over.

Lutz Marten  
lm5@soas.ac.uk

Malin Petzell  
malin.petzell@sprak.gu.se